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ABSTRACT

This collection contains papers presented at a research seminar on children and families. The papers are: (1) "Children in Transition and Crisis" (Solly Dreman); (2) "The Child and the Family" (Dolores M. Luiz and Josua P. P. Fullard); (3) "Support Systems for Children of Divorce" (Diane Braude); (4) "Children and the Family in a Rural Settlement in Gazankulu" (J. C. Kotze); (5) "Paring Down the Family: The Child's Point of View" (Pamela Reynolds); (6) "The Family, Socialization and Rapid Social Change: Transforming Notions of 'Respect' in the Social Identity of Township Youth" (Catherine Campbell); (7) "The Nature of Parental Authority in the Family Life of Black South Africans" (Sylvia Viljoen); (8) "Social Class Differences in Age at First Childbirth and Views on the Importance of Children: A Study of White Women in Grahamstown" (Susan C. Ziehl); (9) "The Development and Evaluation of a Situation-Specific Parent-Training Programme" (A. S. de Vos); (10) "Mediation and Family Violence" (David Scott-Macnab); and (11) "Adjustment in Children and Families: An Integrated Summary" (Solly Dreman). Each of the papers contains references. (TJQ)

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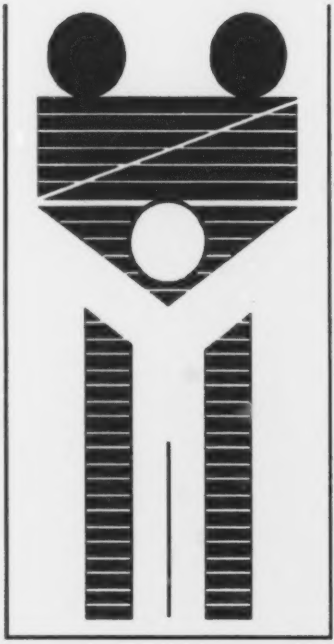
Children and families in distress: working papers from a seminar held on 25-26 July 1991



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Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life
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Children and families in distress: working papers from a seminar held on 25-26 July 1991

DR Braude
C Campbell
AS de Vos
S Dreman
JPP Fullard
JC Kotzé
DM Luiz
PF Reynolds
D Scott-Macnab
S Viljoen
SC Ziehl

Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life
HSRC, Pretoria
1993

The Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life is centred within the Group: Social Dynamics of the Human Sciences Research Council. The emphasis in the programme is on the structure and dynamics of family life, the nature of family disorganization and disintegration, and the nature of the changes taking place with regard to family structure and family processes in society.

As the title indicates, this publication contains the papers (revised) read at a research seminar on children and families during July 1991.

The opinions expressed in the publication are those of the authors and should not necessarily be viewed as those of the Main Committee of the Programme on Marriage and Family Life.

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DEDICATION

Dr Hendrik Gert Strijdom

The late Hendrik Gert Strijdom to whom this publication is dedicated was born on 6 January 1937 and attended school in Citrusdal. He received the degrees B.A., B.A. Hons., M.A. (*cum laude*) and Ph.D. consecutively at US, UP, UNISA and Rhodes University. After a few years as a social worker and probation officer, he joined the Bureau for Educational and Social Research (later HSRC) in 1964.

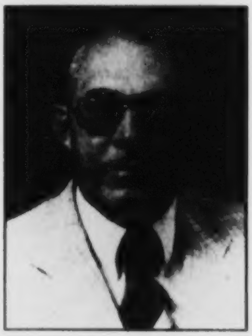
He spent the rest of his working life in the Institute for Sociological Research and at different times headed the Division: Criminological Research, the Division: Family Research and the section for research on alcohol and other drugs. At the time of his sudden death on 9 March 1992 he was manager of the Division: Social Care and Social Security, and programme manager for the HSRC Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life.

It was in relation to the latter programme that Henert Strijdom made his biggest contribution although his earlier work and publications on victimology, recreation, divorce and other family matters made him well known throughout South Africa.

The co-operative programme was launched by means of an exploratory study in the early 1980s as well as several workshops which culminated in publications identifying gaps in research but simultaneously setting guidelines for family research. The fine way in which the programme has developed since then is a tribute to him.

Dr Strijdom took the initiative in organizing the visit of Prof. Dreman of Israel and the seminar on children and families, the papers of which form the basis of this publication. It is therefore dedicated to his memory, to his wide interests, the support he gave to his colleagues, his unfailing enthusiasm and energy and his goodwill to all around him. No research on any aspect of the family can be undertaken without taking notice of his contribution to this field.

He is sorely missed.



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Foreword

In July 1991 Prof. Solly Dreman, a clinical psychologist from the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva, Israel, was a guest of the HSRC Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life, and *inter alia* led a seminar on children and families. He read the introductory paper at this seminar and subsequently wrote the concluding paper in which he discussed the nine other papers presented at the seminar, in the light of current theory on children and families.

All 11 of these papers have been revised and constitute the contents of this publication.

As its number indicates, this publication is the ninth in the series of publications under the Co-operative Programme on Marriage and Family Life. The programme was established in 1986 and its management committee has approved just more than 30 research projects to date. The projects that have been completed and published as reports cover inter alia such broad subjects as family policy and family structures as well as more circumscribed subjects such as the children of divorce, domestic violence and family therapy.

Through the reports, the research results emanating from our projects are disseminated and we believe that the working papers, with their bird's eye view of a number of these projects, will be a useful publication for sociologists and others in social science fields.

Dr Ina Snyman

Manager: HSRC Research Programme
on Marriage and Family Life

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I

Children in transition and crisis

Solly Dreman

Abstract

This paper examines children's coping and adjustment in the face of transition or crisis from an interactional point of view. Neither individual characteristics, nor interpersonal or situational factors, are sufficient to explain children's long-term adjustment. It is rather the interaction between individual characteristics together with changing interpersonal and situational influences which are necessary to understand coping and adjustment over time. Research and clinical observations are presented to support this thesis.

Introduction

In our examination of children's adjustment we will present an **interactional** model which views adjustment as occurring within a framework of multiple feedback mechanisms between the individual and interpersonal and situational factors. This is in contrast to models of family pathology (e.g. Haley, 1977) which view individual psychopathology as resulting mainly from disturbed external factors of an interpersonal nature, or models of trauma which view traumatic reactions to be "the result of an **external** event with no characteristic population and few identifiable risk factors" (see Martini *et al.*, 1990:75). It also differs from **intrapsychic** models such as psychoanalytic theory (e.g. Freud, 1936) which perceive disturbed behaviour as a residue of unresolved unconscious conflicts within the individual. We, on the other hand, propose that adjustment is a dynamic process which involves an ongoing interplay of intrapersonal, interpersonal and situational components or "nested contexts" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The present paper attempts to examine human reactions to traumatic, para-normative and predictable life cycle events using this interactional model as an explanatory framework.

In **traumatic** "man-made" events such as war, terrorism, kidnapping and parental homicide, or traumatic "acts of god" such as floods and earthquakes, dramatic environmental contingencies may negatively influence short-term adjustment, precipitating shock, disorientation, state-anxiety and denial (Dreman, 1991; Eth & Pynoos, 1985; Terr, 1981; 1983). These reactions are referred to as post-traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Figley (1983; 1985) distinguishes between the passive "victim" initially immobilized by traumatic external events versus the "survivor" who, after recovering from the initial shock, copes more actively with his environment and the new post-traumatic realities. Such long-term adjustment is affected by a variety of intrapersonal, interpersonal and situational factors which occur after the actual traumatic events and also by events related to the victim's history prior to the trauma. Influencing such pre- and post-traumatic coping are individual factors such as premorbid personality, previous experience in dealing with trauma and coping styles of the victim, interpersonal factors such as available family support systems, and situational factors such as recurring incidents of trauma-related events.

The interactional model is also applicable to coping and adjustment in the face of **"para-normative events"** (Terkelson, 1980) like divorce, illness and other unexpected events which a family may experience. It is also relevant to the examination of more **predictable life cycle transitions** such as the birth of a child, adolescence, marriage and the "empty nest" which all require considerable change in attitudes, roles and behaviour amongst family members in order to move successfully from one developmental stage to the next (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988).

A. Traumatic events

1. *Traumatic physical injury*

Some proof of the interactional contention is offered in a study of PTSD (Martini *et al.*, 1990) concerning a regatta accident. The Pittsburgh Regatta is a four-day long event that highlights several activities on the city's three rivers. In a speedboat race in August 1988 a boat buffeted by the wind and choppy water suddenly veered into the crowd. Twenty-three people were injured in the accident, 12 of whom were children. Eight of these children were transported to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Six of the families concerned were contacted and agreed to participate in the study two months after the accident. The primary goal of this psychiatric/psychosocial evaluation was to obtain immediate post-injury information on the children's recollection of the accident and their reaction to it as well as their current level of stress and adjustment to the injury. A parent and the child victim were each interviewed and a number of tests measuring adjustment, including tests of affective disorders and PTSD, were applied.

Martini *et al.* (1990) noted that PTSD has been considered by some to be the result of external events with no characteristic population and few identifiable risk factors. This contention is in accordance with the dictates of the interpersonal/situational model which stresses external events and places little emphasis on individual/intrapersonal factors. The variability in the responses to the regatta accident, however, leads to a more complex multidimensional approach to the problem. Arguing against the "external event" thesis was the finding that the presence of PTSD was not related to the nature or the extent of the injury itself (in this case a physical trauma), but was found to be a result of additional individual, interpersonal and situational factors, like a child's positive psychiatric history, available coping styles in the patient and family, the level of family stress, and experience in effectively dealing with stressful episodes in the past.

To illustrate: The child with the highest level of PTSD suffered minimal physical distress and little change in his lifestyle as a result of the accident, arguing against the external events model of post-traumatic symptomatology.

However, this child was located in a family that had undergone several recent transitions leading to less time spent by the parents in the home, higher levels of conflict, less family cohesion, and a lack of effective parental limit setting and control. Another child, with slight injury, who demonstrated severe PTSD symptomatology, had been diagnosed as autistic when younger, as well as being recently diagnosed as having an attention deficit disorder (ADHD). The above interpersonal and intrapersonal deficits resulted in a mild physical injury culminating in a severe post-traumatic disorder, and support an interactional view which considers other intrapersonal and interpersonal and situational factors, besides the traumatic events themselves, as playing a major part in the post-traumatic symptomatology.

Further support for the interactional model was the finding that other children recovered well, even when physical injury was severe, if the family mobilized its resources and took an active and constructive approach to the trauma. This finding is supported by research showing that the child who witnesses an appropriate response in the family is better able to tolerate the immediate and more long-term effects of trauma (Frederick, 1985).

In summary, these researchers suggest that the development of PTSD in children should begin with a consideration of the emotional make-up of the child and the family, with the severity of the trauma evaluated in that context. Such an interactional approach is more likely to predict post-traumatic adjustment than an exclusively individual or external events model of post-traumatic adjustment. There may be a subset of children with varying psychiatric diagnoses or having certain behavioural tendencies that are likely to develop PTSD when involved in even mild forms of trauma, whereas other children may not develop such disorders even when trauma is severe if they have strong personal coping resources and/or a supportive interpersonal network.

2. *Acts of terrorism*

A ten-year follow-up of children whose parents were killed in terrorist activities in Israel suggests that changing intrapersonal, interpersonal and situational factors affect recovery from PTSD (Dreman, 1989; Dreman & Cohen, 1990). On the **individual** level it was shown that children were often plagued by unresolved unconscious issues relating to the original traumatic events which precipitated feelings of helplessness and loss of control. This expressed itself in acting out and delinquent behaviours which served a particular psychological need:

a. Such behaviour gave them some control over their "dangerous" environment. Being exposed to traumatic events may cause children to experience ongoing, largely unconscious, feelings of loss of control and helplessness throughout their life if these feelings have not been "worked through". This may result in compensative behaviour designed to restore feelings of control over an otherwise unpredictable environment. For example, one child stole money from his stepfather even though this was unnecessary, since this parental figure was very generous and always left spending money for him on the table. It was contended that stealing helped the child to "control the purse strings" and hence gain control of his unpredictable environment.

b. It helped these children expiate guilt related to the traumatic events. For example, they often engaged in petty robberies and other minor crimes, committed in an amateurish fashion, almost as if wishing to be caught. It was suggested that these acts, by inviting punishment, permit expiation of "survival guilt" related to the terrorist incidents in which their parents had been killed.

c. Another characteristic of these children was their need for instant impulse gratification and compensation for their earlier losses. These children often marry earlier because of their need to replace the loved ones lost in traumatic events, or engage in delinquent behaviours such as stealing to compensate for their earlier interpersonal losses. This is vividly illustrated by one child who proudly proclaimed: "I do what is good for me and nobody tells me what to do!" Paradoxically, this child's need for instant gratification and control has resulted in loss of control and deficits in his interpersonal relations and attainment of job skills.

These children displayed other behaviours which also reflected a need to deal with archaic feelings of loss of control related to the original trauma. These included re-enactment behaviour where children rehearse the traumatic events repeatedly. To illustrate: Two brothers, whose parents were killed by terrorists who boarded a passenger bus and murdered its passengers in cold blood, continually rehearsed escape procedures by climbing out of a bathroom window in a ritualistic fashion. A narrowed time perspective, including pessimism about the future, was also typical of these children. For example, a child whose father was killed by an explosive planted by a terrorist, commented on his sister's happy disposition by noting: "If you are happy now you'll only be disappointed in the future."

In addition to those behaviours mentioned above, there were psychological symptoms such as generalized fearfulness, separation anxiety, eating disorders, and feelings of shame and stigma. All of these problems noted by us in the Israeli context have also been noted in a recent American review of PTSD in children (Brett, Spitzer & Williams, 1988).

The children also had difficulties in the **interpersonal** realm, often arising from unresolved intrapersonal issues concerning parental loss. This was revealed in two kinds of interpersonal reactions:

a. Early marriage: One of the children married in his teens in order to compensate for the loss of his father and mother, but divorced within a few months of the marital nuptials.

b. Difficulties with interpersonal commitment: Children demonstrated an inability to maintain lasting interpersonal relations because of their earlier unresolved parental loss.

In line with the interactional view presented earlier, a multidimensional interactional approach to intervention with children who are PTSD victims is suggested. Such interventive programmes should consider changing intrapersonal, interpersonal and situational events, as well as prior contingencies. On the **individual** level, for example, it has been shown that children initially attempt to reverse their helplessness via "inner plans of action" (Lifton, 1979). Therapists might capitalize on such intrapersonal predispositions to promote abreaction and a sense of mastery and adjustment. However, while abreactive therapy may ultimately diminish feelings of helplessness and loss of control (Eth & Pynoos, 1985) caution should be exercised with regard to **when** therapy of this nature, designed to decrease defensiveness in the trauma victim, should be applied. In the initial stages of the trauma where the victim is overwhelmed by anxiety and shock, defensive denial may be normative and beneficial, and contribute to the victim's day-to-day optimism and coping (Lazarus, 1985). Removing such defences prematurely may exacerbate already high anxiety levels resulting from trauma, thus negatively affecting coping and adjustment. When stress and anxiety levels decline, intervention promoting abreaction, designed to work through archaic feelings of loss and helplessness (thus contributing to reality testing and long-term adjustment), may be more appropriate.

On the **interpersonal** level it has been noted that a typical reaction of traumatized adolescents is a premature entrance into adulthood, such as that manifested in early marriage. Such behaviour is often meant to compensate for feelings of loss and helplessness related to the murder of family members (Eth & Pynoos, 1985). It is suggested that such disturbing interpersonal behaviours might be reduced through abreactive therapy which diminishes these archaic feelings. Such intrapsychic abreaction might then later facilitate parental limit setting since there would be a diminished need for compensatory behaviours by these child victims. This is an important issue in post-traumatic recovery as evidenced by our findings and those of Martini *et al.* (1990), namely that failure to set limits for PTSD child victims may further exacerbate their symptomatology and feelings of loss of control. Thus different individual and interpersonal intervention strategies, properly sequenced, may complement each other in facilitating children's post-traumatic adjustment.

Interventive work should also consider how substitute parents can be helped to be effective with children who have lost a parent through terrorism or other tragic circumstances. Our work with child victims of terrorism (Dreman, 1989; Dreman & Cohen, 1990) suggests that substitute parents are plagued by feelings of guilt and pity, resulting in them experiencing difficulties in setting limits for these children. Parental substitutes might be cautioned that they should **not** give up their mandate to be a parent under these circumstances. It should be noted that failure to establish effective limit setting may exacerbate, rather than diminish, existing feelings of insecurity in these children. This follows, since parental authority and limit setting provides these child victims with a sense of security in the face of archaic trauma-precipitated feelings of helplessness and loss of control. Interventive work with step-parents has also shown that they must be helped to overcome unrealistic expectations like the "myth of instant love" that expects that step-parent and step-children will instantly love each other (Visher & Visher, 1978). It should be explained that such relationships take time to develop and feelings of affection and love must not be expected instantly but rather be allowed to evolve as time passes. Such interventions should promote parenting which provides both discipline and warmth, or what has been called "authoritative" parenting (Baumrind, 1971; Maccoby & Martin, 1983), and contribute to optimal adjustment in these child victims.

In Israel interpersonal factors related to the family, group and community have proved to be particularly effective in helping overcome PTSD. Thus recovery has been shown to be promoted by family cohesiveness (Solomon *et al.*, 1987); the sharing of feelings in the family (Ayalon, 1983); group treatment which focused on coping with life's problems and conflicts rather than on individual pathology (Ben Yakar, Dasberg & Plotkin, 1978); and community support systems which emphasized the normative non-pathological nature of severe trauma reactions (Toubiana *et al.*, 1988).

On the **situational** level, Israel is prone to ongoing violence and aggression which may precipitate or retrigger PTSD. In our study most of the child victims displayed diffuse anxiety and psychosomatic symptoms on the eve of compulsory military duty at age 18. This is not surprising due to the common life-threatening nature of terrorist activity and military service. Compulsory military induction may hence awaken latent anxieties that a common fate - death - will be shared with the deceased parent. Induction is therefore a predictable, high-risk and culturally-linked stress factor which affects post-traumatic adjustment and may require preventive intervention in the case of known PTSD victims.

Sudden traumatic events may also influence adjustment through recall and abreaction. One of the children in our study witnessed the explosion of a bus six years after her father was killed by terrorists. This resulted in the family reviewing and discussing the original traumatic events for the first time. This in turn promoted better adjustment. Thus the occurrence of traumatic events in the PTSD victim may predispose the individual to abreact, promoting better adjustment and/or rendering him/her more amenable to therapy.

B. Para-normative events

Divorce

Divorce is a "para-normative" event (Terkelson, 1980) which has recently been shown to be of a traumatic nature (Dreman, 1991). Eth and Pynoos (1985) have compared the reactions of children of divorce to the post-traumatic reactions of children who had witnessed the homicide of a parent. Confirming this clinical observation is a recent review of divorce research which shows that immediately following divorce children show PTSD sympto-matology such as denial, shame, anxiety, pessimism, depression, guilt and recurrent intrusive recollections of the traumatic events (Dreman, 1991).

A recent review by Dreman (in press) of children's post-divorce adjustment perceives this process as multidimensional and dynamic. While initial adjustment may be largely determined by intrapersonal child-related variables such as the child's age, gender and temperament, long-term adjustment is to a great extent determined by interaction of the developing child with changing interpersonal and situational variables such as the post-divorce family structure, post-divorce parental co-operation or conflict, family coping mechanisms, social support systems and situational changes in socio-economic status (SES), residence, habits and routines. On the broader societal level, prevailing attitudes towards single-parent families may also influence adjustment. To illustrate a few of these influences family structure, family coping and certain situational factors are considered:

(a) *Family structure.* Boys tend to adjust better in the custody of fathers, while girls tend to adjust better in the custody of mothers. Since mothers usually obtain custody, findings concerning children's post-divorce adjustment have usually shown that boys' adjustment is poorer than that of girls. However, these differences tend to decrease with age. Zaslow (1988; 1989) has recently reviewed such sex differences and suggested that one of the reasons for these differentials decreasing is the fact that, **usually,** the mother remarries and introduces a stepfather into the household. For boys this often improves adjustment since the stepfather may represent a new father figure (Kalter, 1977). However, for girls living with a mother, the introduction of a stepfather may be troublesome, interrupting a close mother-daughter relationship and often resulting in poorer adjustment.

A recent study (Zimiles & Lee, 1991) supports Zaslow's contentions. This study showed that boys displayed poorer adjustment in single-parent families and better adjustment in intact and stepfamilies, whereas girls show poorer adjustment in stepfamilies and better adjustment in intact and single-parent families. This is probably because the modal single-parent family is mother-headed and the modal stepfamily comprises a stepfather and a biological mother. Girls fare better in single-parent than stepfamilies because they have an exclusive relation with the same-sexed parent, while boys fare better in a stepfamily because they usually obtain a same-sexed step-parent, which can neutralize the problematic mother-son relation.

(b) *Family coping.* Recent research shows that coping patterns in divorced parents change over time (Dreman, Orr & Aldor, 1989; 1990). Women in the early "aftermath" (median separation four months) phase of divorce tend to deny and overrate their parental competence, while women in the later "realignment" phase (median separation 22 months) engage in less denial and better reality testing - their ratings of parental competence being lower and more congruent with their low levels of parental efficacy, than those of women in the early aftermath period. In the final "stabilization" phase (at least four years after divorce) women were found to have high ratings of parental competence which were congruent with, and realistically reflected, their high levels of parental efficacy (Dreman & Aldor, in press). This has important adjustment implications for children since women who denied difficulties by overrating parental competence were found to have children with lower levels of self-esteem compared with women whose competence ratings accurately reflected their parental efficacy. These findings supported the interactional thesis in that children's post-divorce adjustment was found to be a function of post-divorce parental coping/reality testing.

(c) *Situational factors (stability of the post-divorce environment).* The most significant limitation of research linking child adjustment to divorce is the failure to control for income and SES (Demo & Acock, 1988). When SES is controlled, children in single-parent families adjust as well as those in intact families (Peterson & Zill, 1986). While custodial mothers usually experience diminished income, custodial and non-custodial fathers usually maintain or improve their standard of living after divorce (Hetherington & Stanley-Hagan, 1987). Research comparing adjustment in paternal as compared with maternal custody families must, therefore, control for SES since superior adjustment reported in paternal custody families may be due to this factor (e.g. Ambert, 1982; 1984).

Other situational factors such as change in residence, changed routines and habits and change in work status of the divorced mother have also been shown to adversely affect post-divorce adjustment (Dreman, in press).

This interactional perspective of divorce adjustment has important interventive implications, as well as implications for family advocates. A recent meta-analysis of divorce research has shown that family conflict is the largest single predictor of poor post-divorce adjustment (Amato & Keith, 1991), whereas parental co-operation contributes significantly to good post-divorce adjustment (Camara & Resnick, 1989). Intervention which encourages post-divorce parental co-operation should, therefore, result in better adjustment despite the change in family structure due to divorce. As for the legal aspects of divorce, the findings that children fare best with the same-sex parent may have important implications in the case of custody disputes between divorcing spouses.

C. Normative life-cycle transitions

Like traumatic and para-normative events, normative life-cycle transitions can be understood in a dynamic multidimensional nested context in which individual development occurs as an ongoing dialectic between the individual and the demand characteristics of the family life-cycle stage or situation in which one is located. Marriage, the birth of a child, adolescence, middle age, the empty nest and the aging family are life-cycle stages which require the individual to undergo attitude change, emotional integration of changed realities, and adaptive behaviour/role change. In accordance with the interactional model, change is promoted through reciprocal accommodation between the individual, the family and society over time.

In adolescence, for example, a youth's pursuit of autonomy is facilitated by the parents' ability to pursue other interests and/or consolidate intimacy in their own couple relationship, thus facilitating "letting go" of their developing youth. Similarly, a young couple who have their first child must redistribute energies, previously devoted to their spouse and extra-familial pursuits, to include their new roles as parents of an infant.

Changing societal contingencies may affect this adjustment process. In the 20th century the birth of a first child has been labelled "the pressure cooker stage" (Carter & McGoldrick, 1988), since it conflicts with women's increasing aspirations for career and personal development outside the family. Related to this is the finding that this is a period characterized by the highest divorce rates in the entire family life cycle. Good adjustment might require a process of mutual accommodation by the young couple in which parenting duties are shared in such a way that both career aspirations and the couple's need for intimacy can be satisfied. The lack of such a reciprocal accommodation, which considers changing individual, familial and societal influences, may contribute to poor long-term adjustment and perhaps pathology.

Summary

Children's adjustment to transition and crisis was examined from an interactional point of view. Traumatic events involving injury, terrorism and divorce were discussed, as were processes of normative transition in the family life cycle. It was concluded that long-term adjustment in children and their families is a function of the ongoing interaction of the developing child with changing interpersonal and situational factors. Implications for treatment and intervention were presented. Carefully designed longitudinal research, which investigates how changing interpersonal and situational contingencies affect individual adjustment should help the clinician and educator deal more effectively with children and families in transition and crisis.

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II

The child and the family

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1. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION

1.1 *INTRODUCTION*

The impact of the handicapped child upon the family has been the focus of many research articles over the past three decades. Although such research initially focused on maternal behaviours and reactions (Beckman, 1983; Breslau, Staruch & Mortimer, 1982), it subsequently expanded to include fathers and siblings of handicapped children (e.g., Breslau, Weitzman & Messenger, 1981). However, despite the inclusion of all family members, research designed to investigate the stress associated with a handicapped child frequently adopted a unidimensional perspective based on a simple, univariate, stimulus-response model.

Research in this area has also been limited by conceptual and methodological problems (Minnes, 1988). Many studies had a strong clinical orientation characterized by the use of case reports and a tendency to focus on maladaptive responses and pathology rather than on coping and adaptation. Furthermore, a strong theoretical base was often missing and operational concepts amenable to hypothesis testing were infrequently used.

In the 1980s the need for theoretically-based research and for improved methodological rigour as well as the need to focus on the multiple factors that may mediate stress and facilitate coping with a handicapped child were increasingly recognized by researchers internationally (e.g., Cole, 1986; Holroyd, 1982; McCubbin *et al.*, 1980; Steyn *et al.*, 1987). On the South African scene Steyn *et al.* were foremost in stating that the research done on family life among different population groups in the RSA was far from adequate. The following problems were noted by them:

- Research is often fragmentary in nature and does not provide a comprehensive image of family problems in South Africa.
- It is mostly descriptive, with little or no attention being paid to analytical research in order to determine the influence of relevant variables on family functioning.
- It is often found to be superficial without penetrating the problem.
- It is obsolete and more up-to-date research is needed in order to provide a picture of the present family situation.
- The research has totally neglected some aspects of family life, and where those aspects are dealt with it is often restricted to the white middle-class urban family.
- Research on the black and coloured family is often restricted to studies of family structures, illegitimacy and single parenthood. (Steyn *et al.*, 1987:928-929)

The recognition of these limitations in research on stress in the families of handicapped children has resulted in a growing body of knowledge based on sound theoretical principles. One of the most prominent orientations that has emerged is that of conceptualizing the family as a system having properties that are different from the sum total of the attributes of its individual members (Fisher, 1982; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Minuchin, 1978; Reiss & Oliveri, 1980). This systemic approach to families has led to the abandonment of simple univariate, stimulus-response models of stress in families in favour of transactional, multivariate, mediated models (e.g., Folkman, 1984; Folkman & Lazarus, 1984; Lazarus *et al.*, 1985; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).

When stress is considered as a multivariate, multiprocess system, no single variable can explain it. Many variables in a family system can potentially contribute to the immediate appraisal of stress and emotional effects, and possibly long-term effects. Thus, if the system is considered as a whole, stress can be considered as a rubric rather than a single variable; hence no single variable is capable of explaining the emotional response (Lazarus *et al.*, 1985). It thus follows that what is required is a multivariate measure of family stress that incorporates the various relevant variables.

This fact was aptly acknowledged by Holroyd, a prominent researcher of families of handicapped children, when she stated:

> It is difficult to measure stress in family systems or to discern cause and effect because of interactions among child, parent, and family variables. (Holroyd, 1988:336)

Holroyd (1987) suggested that family stress is a product of innumerable variables, including personal resources of family members, degree of handicap or illness, financial resources and community support. Using the stress model of Lazarus and his associates as a theoretical basis, she developed the *Questionnaire on Resources and Stress for Families with Chronically Ill or Handicapped Members* (QRS) (Holroyd, 1987), which is a comprehensive measure of the stress in families caring for a chronically ill or handicapped family member. The QRS has been used to examine stress in families with various handicapping conditions and has proved effective in various cultures, for example, Dunst, Trivette and Cross' studies (1986a, 1986b) of Appalachian parents, Kodaki and Inanami's studies (1978a, 1978b) on Japanese parents and Glidden's study (1986) on British parents.

Holroyd's research has also served as an impetus for the present study which is an attempt to identify and describe, through a multivariate approach, the impact of the dependent disabled individual on his/her family. It is an attempt to provide an answer to a key question posed by Knussen and Cunningham (1988) in their comprehensive article on stress, disability and handicap, namely "which people need what resources at which times?" (p. 344)

The general aim of this study is to identify and describe the stress patterns in a number of South African families from two population groups, namely, the blacks and the whites, in which a family member suffers from a mental or physical condition or chronic illness. With the use of the QRS this study will identify and describe the stress patterns in families with children diagnosed as mentally retarded, physically handicapped or chronically ill (i.e., diabetic or allergic). Once specific stressors are identified, appropriate counselling methods can be constructed for the handicapped groups concerned, thus rendering such services more effective and relevant in a time of shrinking resources.

1.2 FAMILY STRESS: A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Exposure to stress is intrinsic to family life, with responses to both crisis events and enduring strains offering evidence of the resources and durability of the family as an ongoing system. Studies provide clear evidence that specific characteristics of children may influence the amount of stress the family experiences (Wels & Robbroeckx, 1989). This applies specifically in cases of physical and mental handicaps or chronic illness. These characteristics are relatively unalterable and thus the stress experienced by the families is enduring. In order to understand the processes, factors and dynamics that influence the outcome of how the stressor of an impairment impacts on the individual and the family, the stress model developed by Lazarus and his associates, which forms the theoretical basis of this study, will be addressed in the following section.

1.2.1 *Lazarus' family stress model*

Lazarus and his colleagues (e.g., Folkman, 1984; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Lazarus *et al.*, 1985) described a model that has been increasingly used by researchers who are primarily interested in disability. The model allows for a variety of coping resources and responses, focuses on the responses of the individual and is comprehensive as well as adaptable.

This model emphasizes a person's relationships with his environment, not with a particular stimulus or response. Within this model, stress is defined as "a relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and as endangering his or her well-being" (Folkman, 1984:840). It is a process which is dynamic, interactive and reactive (Knussen & Cunningham, 1988). The stress process is mediated by two processes, namely cognitive appraisal and coping.

According to Lazarus (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) stress results when an individual appraises a situation as harmful, threatening or challenging. The degree of stress associated with this appraisal is contingent upon the strength of the commitment involved in the situation, with higher stress associated with more strongly-held commitments. Appraisal refers to the process that ascribes meaning to an event or encounter. It is central to the model in that nothing is considered stressful unless it is appraised as such by an individual. Thus a handicap or disability is only stressful for a parent or family if it is appraised as such by these members.

There are two main levels of appraisal: primary and secondary. Primary appraisal refers to the judgement of the event as irrelevant, positive or negative. Negative judgement can be related to existing harm or loss such as handicap or disability, to threat of potential harm or loss, or to challenge, which is an opportunity for gain, growth or mastery. Primary appraisal is also influenced by personal factors such as beliefs and commitments, as well as environmental and situational factors such as the familiarity of the event, the likelihood of its occurrence and the nature of the possible outcome (Knussen & Cunningham, 1988). Secondary appraisal involves the individual's evaluation of his/her coping resources once the event is appraised as stressful. This involves the evaluation of the following:

1. Physical assets, e.g., health, energy and stamina.
2. Social assets, e.g., social networks and support systems.
3. Psychological assets, e.g., beliefs and values, problem-solving skills, self-esteem and morale.
4. Material assets, e.g., money, equipment and tools.

Within Lazarus' model, coping refers to the individual's cognitive and behavioural efforts to master, reduce or tolerate the internal and/or external demands that are created by the stressful transaction. The coping can be focused on the regulation of emotion, or on the management of the problem. Both forms of coping are used in most stressful encounters and the relative proportions of each form vary according to how the encounter is appraised. Emotion-focused coping is used to control distressing emotion, sometimes by altering the meaning of the outcome. Problem-focused coping is used to control the troubled person-environment relationship through problem solving, decision making and/or direct action. Most people restrict themselves to one type of coping (Knussen & Cunningham, 1988).

It is evident that the stress process is dynamic in that the processes of appraisal and coping influence each other. If the immediate outcome of coping is not successful, reappraisal can initiate a search for new coping strategies from the resources. The outcome of a stressful encounter is not always negative; parents can gain in self-confidence and self-esteem as they cope with a stressful handicap, thereby increasing their psychological resources (Lazarus *et al.*, 1985).

The model proposed by Lazarus and his associates has provided the foundation of many multivariate studies on family stress (e.g., Holroyd, 1982, 1987, 1988; Wels & Robbroeckx, 1989). Specifically, it provided the basis on which Holroyd constructed the QRS. As the QRS will be utilized in the present study, a brief description of the scales follows.

1.2.2 *The Questionnaire on Resources and Stress (QRS)*

Holroyd (1987) designed the QRS to identify the relevant variables that contribute to or ameliorate stress in a family with a disabled family member, and the family's reaction to these stressors. The QRS is a multi-dimensional, objective, self-report questionnaire consisting of 285 true/false self-administered items divided into 15 scales. It focuses on the stressful impact of an illness or handicap on the questionnaire respondent and other family members. Every scale of the QRS has been scored for 329 cases and the scores obtained have been converted into percentile equivalents for four major classifications, namely, developmental disabilities, neuro-muscular disease, psychiatric problems and chronic medical illness.

A combination of deductive and inductive approaches was used to develop the 15 QRS scales, which was in accordance with the test development approach of Burisch (1984). The 15 QRS scales provide information covering three areas: problem areas for the respondent, for the family, and for the disabled or chronically ill member.

- ***Description of each scale***

Personal problem scales

Scale 1 - Poor Health/Mood (PHM): The 11 items reflect sadness, depression, fatigue, tension, worry, poor health and a feeling of pressure resulting from taking care of the identified patient. The sadness is associated with dissatisfaction in the respondent's role in the family and not just the emotional stress of caring for a handicapped child. The internal consistency is high ($r = 0.79$).

Scale 2 - Excess Time Demands (ETD): The 14 items indicate whether the respondent is unable to have outside activities or time for personal interests due to excessive responsibility for the ill or handicapped family member. The more severe the patient's handicap, the higher the scores are likely to be. High scores are associated with fewer social supports, lower family income and lower role satisfaction. Internal consistency is high ($r = 0.73$).

Scale 3 - Negative Attitude toward Index Case (NA): According to Holroyd (1986) this 23 item scale actually measures over-sensitivity to illness and handicap more than critical attitudes. Higher scores may indicate worry about how much to expect from a disabled person as well as social sensitivity in terms of what people might think of the patient and of the respondent. Internal consistency is high ($r = 0.73$).

Scale 4 - Overprotection/Dependency (OPD): The 13 items measure dependency of the patient due to severe limitations. The attitude of the respondent toward the disability or illness is also tapped. Internal consistency is moderate ($r = 0.67$).

Scale 5 - Lack of Social Support (LSS): The ten items reflect a lack of community services and resources, a lack of family involvement and supportive friendships, as well as family disagreement regarding caretaking responsibilities. Internal consistency is not indicated in the manual.

Scale 6 - Over-commitment/Martyrdom (OC): The items indicate absorbed involvement with the patient, as if only the respondent can care for the disabled family member. Scores tend to be high among parents of young children with life-threatening illness. Internal consistency is low ($r = 0.28$).

Scale 7 - Pessimism (P): The 13 items reveal an expectation that the condition of the chronically ill or handicapped members will worsen, that the family and respondent will experience increasing burden, and that institutionalization is an option to consider. This scale indicates realistic hopelessness. Internal consistency is moderate ($\underline{r}$ =0.65).

Family problem scales

Scale 8 - Lack of Family Integration (LFI): The 23 items reflect emotional problems and stress among family members, disharmony in the family, inability to include the patient in disharmony in the family, inability to include the patient in family activities, and an atmosphere of rejection toward the patient. Internal consistency is high ($\underline{r}$ =0.78).

Scale 9 - Limits on Family Opportunity (LFO): The nine items reflect family members' lack of opportunities for personal development, jobs, education and social activities, and dissatisfaction with household and caretaking work. Internal consistency is moderate ($\underline{r}$ =0.69).

Scale 10 - Financial Problems (FP): Inadequate family income, as well as high cost of care for the disabled family member, is reflected by high scores on the 17 items of this scale. Internal consistency is moderately high ($\underline{r}$ =0.74).

Problems for the disabled member

Scale 11: Physical Incapacitation (P1): This scale indicates whether the patient required assistance with physical self-care acts and the use of special aids, like medicine or a bedpan. It also indicates whether the patient is unable to participate in normal outings and sports activities. Internal consistency of the 14 items is moderate (r =0.61).

Scale 12: Lack of Activities for Index Case (LA): The six items reveal whether disabled family members have enough activities to keep themselves occupied. Endorsement of even one item indicates significant impairment, either physical or mental. Internal consistency is moderate ($\underline{r}$ =0.63).

Scale 13: Occupational Limitations for Index Case (OL): Sufficient opportunities for the disabled family member to engage in education or training and family concerns about future employability of the patient are measured by the seven items. Internal consistency is only moderate (r =0.41).

Scale 14: Social Obtrusiveness (SO): This scale indicates concern about social rejection because of association with a patient whose appearance and behaviour are unusual. It also measures sensitivity to community opinion. Internal consistency is very low (r =0.24).

Scale 15 - Difficult Personality Characteristics (DP): The 32 items indicate personality problems or psychiatric symptoms (anxiety, depression, compulsivity) and cognitive impairment. High scores may also indicate that respondents feel unsupported by the community and constricted by their caretaking roles (and therefore report more problems in the patient). Internal consistency is high (r =0.88).

• *Interpretation of scores*

T-scores above a score of 70 may be interpreted with descriptive material found in the manual. Tentative or qualified interpretations may be given to T-scores between 60 and 70, while T-scores under 60 should be interpreted very cautiously because that usually indicates that the respondent's responses cannot be differentiated from respondents in non-clinical populations (i.e., the raw score was within one standard deviation of the mean).

• *Reliability*

The Kuder-Richardson measure of internal consistency reflects a high internal consistency of r =0.96 for the QRS questionnaire.

• *Validity*

Criterion validity involves relating test scores to a variety of criteria in various situations in order to determine (a) what the scales measure, (b) how well they measure, and (c) whether they supply information that can be used in making more accurate decisions. These criteria must be capable of and relevant to being operationalized (Holroyd, 1986). In her quest for criterion validation of the

QRS Holroyd (1988) provided a comprehensive review of research pertaining to criterion validation of the measure. She concluded:

> The QRS appears to fulfil four requirements that Brown (1983) has proposed for an acceptable level of validity: (1) the relationship between predictor and criterion scores is statistically significant; (2) using the test probably results in more correct decisions than would be made by resorting to base rates alone (although this has not been tested); (3) the test possesses some utility, i.e., it would result in some gain to the user; and (4) the test provides some unique information. Use of the QRS is justified when it meets these four requirements in any particular situation. (Holroyd, 1988:352)

Validation studies have indicated that the QRS is valuable in discriminating among populations which differ in degree of handicap, in parent attributes, in community resources available, and in whether or not the handicapped member is living at home with the family. Most of this research compared scores of two or more groups whose responses would be expected to differ due to the type of illness or handicap experienced and/or the availability of family and community resources. In the absence of measures of unambiguous external criteria for the type of stress assessed by the QRS, the statistically more rigorous approach of correlating QRS scores with external criterion scores was not feasible. A validity coefficient (as in validation of intelligence tests) was thus not obtained (Holroyd, 1986). She stated that to date there is no well-established test of stress on families caring for handicapped or chronically ill members against which to validate the QRS. Furthermore, she suggested that some of the external criteria are therefore what Burisch (1984) referred to as quasi-criteria, not necessarily a better index of stress than the QRS scales themselves. According to Holroyd (1986) the QRS was actually used as the external criterion for stress by several researchers shortly after it was designed. Brown (1983) asserted that construct validation is an ongoing process after the initial compilation of the questionnaire. Holroyd (1988) stated that the QRS awaits construct validation research that relates the QRS scales to theories of family stress.

- ***Applicability to the South African situation***

The QRS may be considered a culture-fair measure which has been validly used in different cultural groups. Although it was developed in the USA, norms are based on parents of children from the USA and New Zealand (Holroyd 1974, 1986). Furthermore, several studies have suggested the validity of the QRS for use in different cultures, for example, Dunst, Trivette and Cross' studies (1986a, 1986b) of Appalachian parents, Kodaki and Inanami's studies (1978a, 1986b) on Japanese parents and Glidden's study (1986) on British parents. The QRS has also been used effectively in South Africa with white and coloured parents (Van Rooyen, 1989). Van Rooyen translated the QRS into Afrikaans according to Brislin's (1970) back-translation technique which has proved to be a reliable method in many studies.

In conclusion it appears from the above discussion that stress is viewed as a multivariate process that has a complex impact on the family, especially in the presence of a handicapped child. The QRS appears to provide a reliable and valid measure of family stress that covers a wide arena of family functioning. It seems as if the QRS has established itself as an invaluable instrument, measuring what it was designed for in a field where no other comparable devices exist. Research data pertaining to the QRS cover a wide range of application, coming from various laboratories and even different cultures.

1.3 THE IMPACT OF THE HANDICAPPED OR CHRONICALLY ILL CHILD ON THE FAMILY

1.3.1 *Impact on the parents*

The parents of a mentally retarded child experience role changes as their lifestyle adapts to caring for the child. The demands of such role changes place significant stress on the parents. Although, during the first year and a half, parents of mentally retarded children are similar to parents of a non-handicapped child in most dimensions related to coping with a new baby, the parents of the mentally retarded child, however, experience feelings of hopeless-ness, anger and rejection (Waisbren, 1980).

When compared with mothers of non-handicapped children, mothers of mentally retarded children showed greater depressive and disphoric affect; more preoccupation with the child; less sense of maternal competence; less enjoyment of the child; and a greater possessiveness (Cummings, Bayley & Rie, 1966). Furthermore, several studies reveal that mothers of mentally retarded children experience higher levels of stress than mothers of non-handicapped children (Beckman, 1983; Bradshaw & Lawton, 1978; Burden, 1980; Holroyd & McArthur, 1976; Tew & Laurence, 1975; Wishart, Bidder & Gray, 1981).

However, it should be noted that methodological discrepancies exist between these studies and it is possible that the stress reported by mothers may be related to subjective factors rather than to directly measurable features. Significant factors in family adaptation are the perceived adequacy of the mother's informal social supports, her pattern of coping, and her beliefs regarding the handicap. In a study conducted by Bristol (1984) these factors were found to be more related to family adaptation than the severity of the handicap itself.

Fathers of mentally retarded children experience greater negative impact than fathers of chronically ill children (Cummings, 1976). They also tend to be more depressed; have lower self-esteem; express a lack of interpersonal satisfaction; and undergo long-term personality change resembling a pattern of neurotic-like constriction (Cummings, 1976). When compared to mothers, fathers appear to have more knowledge regarding the retardation; are more objective;

less emotionally involved with the child; and concerned about future problems (Hersh, 1970). According to Peck and Stephens (1960) fathers are more able to express their feelings about the mentally retarded child, and they set the pattern of acceptance and rejection of the child in the home.

Fathers tend to be more accepting of a mentally retarded daughter than of a mentally retarded son (Grossman, 1972). Fathers' reactions may be influenced by traditional sex role assignment (Price-Bonham & Addison, 1978). Farber (1960) noted that the gender of a disabled child is perceived differently by various socio-economic status groups and that these perceptions have differential effects on marital integration.

Ethnic differences in parents' levels of acceptance of mentally retarded children have been found in several cross-cultural studies (e.g., Waisbren, 1980). However, Van Rooyen and Luiz (1989) found that stress patterns differed for English-speaking parents of pervasively developmentally disordered children when they were compared with their Afrikaans-speaking counterparts. Thus research findings relating to the influence of ethnic group membership on stress patterns in families with a handicapped child are inconclusive.

Although the presence of a mentally retarded child in the home is a stressor, this need not necessarily exert a negative influence on the marital relationship. It appears that the level of marital integration prior to the presence of the mentally retarded child has a more significant effect than the influence of the child (Farber, 1959). Studies regarding the marital satisfaction of parents with a mentally retarded child reveal significant variation in the findings obtained. This may be due to the non-uniformity of marital response; or it may suggest the influence of factors other than the presence of a retarded child, for example, the severity of the handicap, the age and sex of the child and the level of marital satisfaction prior to the presence of the child (Crnic, Friedrich & Greenberg, 1983).

The adjustment to having a physically handicapped child can begin abruptly at the birth of the child. This sudden reality evokes fairly clear reaction patterns. Typically, the initial reaction of shock and disbelief is followed by a desire to withdraw in order to come to terms with the child's handicap. According to

Shakespeare (1975) this may be followed by a mourning reaction from the parents. When the physical handicap is not immediately obvious at birth, the realization and acceptance process is more gradual. Emotional reactions may vary. These reactions include depression, frustration, anger, shock, guilt, feelings of isolation, loss of self-esteem, blaming and criticism of others (especially the medical staff who were involved at the birth), as well as feelings of helplessness and defeat (Shakespeare, 1975).

In a study conducted by Kazak and Marvin (1984) it was found that mothers of physically handicapped children experienced more depression linked to parenting issues; felt less competent as mothers; and had less free time for themselves or to spend with their spouse than did mothers of non-handicapped children.

Friedrich and Friedrich (1981) found that parents with handicapped children (i.e., mentally and physically handicapped) experienced less satisfactory marriages; less social support; less religiosity and less psychological well-being than parents of non-handicapped children. In addition it was found that parents of handicapped children had fewer psychosocial assets with which to counteract the stress related to coping with their child.

According to Breslau, Staruch & Mortimer (1982) the psychological functioning of mothers may be negatively affected by the presence of a physically disabled child in the home. It appears that a critical factor in the mother's response is the impact of the condition on the child's functioning, as this has significant implications for the level of daily care required.

McCubbin and Figley (1983) conducted a study in order to investigate the difference in the coping styles of mothers and fathers of handicapped children. Based on a sample of parents of children with cerebral palsy the results indicated similar coping profiles between mothers and fathers. It was noted however that whereas mothers sought opportunities to discuss their feelings with their friends, fathers preferred the relative privacy of discussing important concerns with their spouse.

Evidence regarding the effects of the physically handicapped child on the marriage relationship is inconclusive. According to Shakespeare (1975) coping with a physically handicapped child does not generally affect the relationship between the parents. However, if the marriage was unstable prior to the birth of the child, then coping with the physically handicapped child could be an extra stressor in an already strained relationship. Lack of assistance and support from family and friends may lead to feelings of isolation and marital stress (Erlank, 1984). A significant source of stress may also result from the financial burden of caring for the handicapped child (Erlank, 1984).

Care for the diabetic child involves an enormous amount of responsibility and stress for the parents. Care is not only long-term; it also involves the daily stress and responsibility of the treatment regime, including diet and medication. Typically, parents are introduced to their child's condition through a terrifying experience of coma and hospitalization (Craig, 1982). This can be very stressful, and may invoke reactions of bewilderment, shock, anxiety, fear, insomnia, depression and guilt (Kovacs *et al.*, 1990). Typically, a short period of emotional disequilibrium follows the diagnosis of diabetes (Kovacs, 1982).

The adjustment of mothers with diabetic children may be influenced by the characteristics of the child, for instance emotionally distressed children tend to be problematic for their mothers (Kovacs *et al.*, 1990). Demographic features, such as the socio-economic status of the mother, may also play a role in the mother's adjustment as such factors can limit resources. There have been relatively few studies on the reactions of fathers of diabetic children. This is most likely due to the greater involvement of mothers in the daily care and treatment regime of the diabetic child. The role of the father appears to be limited in caring for the diabetic child. Fathers may participate more if the child is male, or if the diabetes is difficult to control. Mothers and fathers tend to differ in their reactions to the diagnosis of diabetes (Galatzer & Laron, 1981). Kovacs (1982) found that mothers tended to be more depressed, anxious and distressed than fathers during the first year after diagnosis.

The necessity of being strict with the child may cause stress for the parents and this may result in marital conflict. It appears that problems related to dealing with the diabetic child may be age related (Hurter & Hurter, 1982). In dealing with younger children who do not understand the process, parents face the difficulties of having to inflict pain in the form of daily injections. From 6 - 12 years of age, there is pressure in the form of managing the dietary requirements. When the child reaches adolescence the parents face anxiety due to rebelliousness, the withdrawal of the adolescent, and the gradual loss of control over the child's metabolic situation. This can result in parental alarm and insecurity. Some of the parental problems are independent of the age of the diabetic child. For example, there may be anxiety and depression regarding the child's future (Hurter & Hurter, 1982). If the diabetes is hereditary, the carrier parent may experience extreme guilt at having passed on the disease. In addition, guilt may arise from having to curtail the behaviour of the child as a protective measure (Brink, 1982).

There is constant pressure on the parents of allergic children to prevent their children from coming into contact with allergens. Despite precautions, it is sometimes impossible to prevent an allergic attack. When this happens parents are inclined to blame themselves. This constant pressure leaves parents feeling exhausted, angry and guilty (Cherry, 1989; Dubo *et al.*, 1961). Boxer, Carson and Miller (1988) discovered that families frequently cannot or will not adapt to the demands of the allergic child. This exacerbates the condition, resulting in more stress for the parents and the family as a whole.

The allergic child may be fretful and the symptoms of the allergy may be extremely irritating to the parent. Negative and critical attitudes towards the child may occur (Viljoen, 1986). The parent may feel guilty about experiencing negative feelings towards the child, and may try to compensate by being overprotective (Sly, 1980).

According to a study conducted by Winifred (1987) mothers of asthmatic children experienced more stressful life events and less adequate social support than mothers of healthy children. Mothers may also exhibit difficulties of impulse control or ambivalence of emotional expression (Wahlstrom, 1987). However, more systematic investigations are needed to clarify parental stressors in families with allergic children.

1.3.2 *Impact on the siblings*

Brothers and sisters serve important functions for each other. Such functions may include appraisal, support, security in the form of cohesive defense groups, acting as socializing agents, and reciprocally controlling behaviour by means of pressurizing one another (Minuchin, 1978). There is a lack of understanding regarding the world of siblings as family health research has focused mainly on the mother-child dyad. In addition, variation in methodological adequacy has produced conflicting results in this area of study.

The presence of a mentally retarded child can exert negative effects on non-retarded siblings. Such effects include detrimental effects on the non-retarded sibling's individual functioning; high degrees of anxiety and conflicts with parents; lower sociability; and adoption of life goals involving dedication or sacrifice (Farber, 1960, 1963; Fowle, 1968). In a study conducted by Simeonsson and McHale (1981) it was reported that male siblings younger than the retarded child revealed greater psychological dysfunction than younger female siblings; however, female siblings older than the retarded child were psychologically more at risk. This extra vulnerability in older female siblings may be due to extra responsibilities for example, child care and housework (Byrne & Cunningham, 1985).

The influence of a mentally retarded child need not be totally negative. Positive effects include an increase in altruistic concern and tolerance towards others (Grossman, 1972). The attitude of the parents plays a key role in the development of the siblings' attitude towards the retarded child. When parents work through their own feelings and adopt a positive outlook, it is likely that the siblings' attitudes will follow suit. Adverse effects on the siblings of a mentally retarded child are most likely in families where the presence of the mentally retarded child is only one of a number of stressors acting upon the family (Gath, 1974).

Siblings of the physically handicapped child are often caring and supportive; however, they also experience stress in coping with a handicapped person in the home (Russell, 1978). They may experience conflicting feelings and emotions. For example, younger children may be jealous of the special attention given to the handicapped child, and may act out their frustration by

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showing off, or becoming aggressive in order to capture the attention of the parents.

According to Shakespeare (1975) the following basic reactions occur when a child is affected by the physical handicap of a sibling: guilt feelings result from having "pestered" the parents for a brother or sister; jealousy may result from the attention given to the handicapped child; they may experience embarrassment and difficulty in explaining the sibling to their peers, and they may feel that the handicap is a negative reflection of the family.

Siblings may be affected by parental anxiety toward the handicapped child, especially the heightened anxiety experienced during periods when the handicapped child is hospitalized. The family routine is likely to be considerably disrupted during such a period, and healthy siblings may feel rejected and unimportant (Burton, 1975). This may be exacerbated by parents feeling tense and impatient. Healthy siblings may also experience stress in the form of missing the hospitalized child, and worrying about his or her well-being.

Whereas the younger siblings of a physically handicapped child are more likely to feel jealous and exhibit resentment towards their parents, older siblings tend to react differently (Burton, 1975). They are more likely to have a positive attitude, be more caring and protective, and feel responsibility towards the handicapped child (Burton, 1975).

The effects of the diabetic child on his/her siblings depend on the severity of the illness. When the diabetes is severe, the medical and management requirements may cause considerable long-term disruption in the household. Siblings may feel resentment towards the child who is receiving such a lot of attention. They may also feel worry about contracting the condition themselves (Beit-Halachmie *et al.*, 1982). Somatic effects may be experienced. For example, in a study conducted by Ferrari (1983), siblings of diabetic children reported somatic complaints four times as often as the siblings of healthy children. The siblings of the diabetic child may not necessarily experience negative effects. Positive influences can include the development of interpersonal skills and prosocial behaviour.

Healthy siblings of allergic children may be affected by their allergic siblings and are often required to make adjustments for the allergic child. This can result in healthy siblings becoming more emotionally controlled and more responsible in the family context (Wahlstrom, 1987).

1.3.3 *Impact on the child*

Unfortunately, many mentally retarded children experience unhappiness, anxiety, hostility, and feelings of unworthiness. This may result in self-defeating behaviours in an attempt to cope with the world around them.

Associative physical and psychiatric disorders may accompany the handicap of mental retardation. Although some mentally retarded children have no additional disability, some are multihandicapped. However, organicity is not the only factor in the plight of the mentally handicapped child. Social factors, such as rejection, can cause or exacerbate emotional disturbance in retarded children. The relationship between disturbance and rejection is complex and somewhat dialectic in that whilst rejection may cause emotional disturbance, mentally retarded children may be rejected because of their undesirable behaviour characteristics (Jacobs & Pierce, 1968; Simeonsson, 1978).

Physically handicapped children may encounter marked adjustment problems (Anderson, Clarke & Spain, 1982). Some of the typical adjustment problems encountered by the handicapped child include lack of self-confidence; conduct disorder resulting from frustration and anger; separation anxiety; feelings of rejection; and depression.

Not all of the effects of the handicap need be negative. A physical handicap can result in the development of a great deal of determination as the individual strives to overcome the debilitating effects of his or her handicap.

Diabetes impacts on every area of the diabetic child's life, yet despite this, diabetics are encouraged to lead normal lives. They are expected to take responsibility from an early age for daily medical requirements and dietary precautions. In order to function effectively they are required to gain special knowledge regarding their condition and how to take care of themselves. One of the main messages conveyed to the diabetic child through all of these expectations is that he or she is different, and is therefore required to behave differently from other children. This can exert great pressure on the child. Diabetic children are expected to develop responsibility and co-operation from a young age, to a degree not expected of other children (Marrero *et al.*, 1982). The diabetic child faces conflicts and pressures which are not encountered by other children without diabetes or other chronic disease (Shouval & Galatzer, 1982).

One of the main restrictions facing the diabetic child involves lifestyle. Diabetic children are unable to participate fully in the activities of their peers. Periods of hospitalization may result in disruption of routine; painful medical procedures; and separation from family and friends. This can provoke anxiety in the child. The diabetic child may also perceive the illness as a punishment for bad behaviour, or may become angry with his/her parents for allowing this to happen. In very severe instances of the disease, children may feel a sense of helplessness as previously acquired developmental tasks may be temporarily lost.

The medical dependence on parents may influence the child's sense of autonomy. This, accompanied by the feeling of being "different", can influence the child's self-esteem.

The life-altering effects of diabetes are especially evident during adolescence as the requirements of diabetic control conflict with typical adolescent social activities. This can result in conflicts with parental figures and rebellion against the treatment. During late adolescence issues such as the life implications of diabetes, marriage and the possibility of passing it on to their children become stressful to the diabetic (Guthrie & Guthrie, 1975).

Research results indicate a similarity between the effects of allergy on the child and the effects of chronic illness on the child. These effects may include academic deficits; for example, children may be one to three years behind at school (Freudenberg *et al.*, 1980). There is also evidence of scholastic underachievement in mathematics and reading (Thomas, 1971). Boys may experience behavioural problems and problems in social competency (Thomas, 1971); and they may be more tense and emotional than healthy boys (Viljoen, 1986). Girls may develop endurance and hardiness, resulting from the limitations of allergies (Viljoen, 1986). Viljoen (1986) ascribed these sex differences to the overprotection of boys as opposed to girls with allergies.

Despite possible negative emotional and behavioural effects caused by the stress of suffering from a chronic illness, positive effects have also been reported. Nelms (1989) suggested that diabetic and asthmatic children developed significantly higher levels of emotional responsiveness and empathy than healthy children.

The inconclusive findings in this area of research may be due to the fact that there is no simple relationship between the child's adjustment and disease severity (Perrin, Maclean & Perrin, 1989). Parental perceptions of the severity of the ailment may play a key role in the child's adjustment. Similarly, levels of parental stress exert an influence on the amount of stress experienced by the child (Blotcky *et al.*, 1985).

1.4 *STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM*

In the introductory section of this paper, evidence was presented which pointed to the specific need for sound methodological research on families with a handicapped child (Steyn *et al.*, 1987). It is also evident from the discussion in Section 1.2 that in recent times, major inroads have been made in research on the handicapped child and the effects the child causes within the context of the family (e.g., Holroyd, 1976, 1988). This research has laid a solid foundation for on-going research world-wide and particularly in South Africa (e.g., Van Rooyen & Luiz, 1989).

The specific merit of Holroyd's contribution lies in the construction of a multivariate measure of family stress and coping, namely the QRS (Holroyd, 1976, 1988). From the discussion of the QRS in Section 1.2.2 it is evident that it is a reliable and valid measure.

The research results presented in Section 1.3 of this paper provide sufficient evidence of the handicapped or chronically ill child's contribution to unique stress situations within marriages and families. However, it is evident from the discussion that methodological flaws, the lack of appropriate control groups and controversial results suggest that these results should be validated by further research. Despite these criticisms, certain conclusions were drawn, the most important being that the extent to which the family experiences stress has been shown to be related to the following variables, namely type of handicap (Holroyd, 1974, 1982; Minnes, 1984, 1986), the degree of disability (Holroyd, 1974, 1982; Minnes, 1984, 1988), the sex of the child (Viljoen, 1986) and the age of the child (Beckman, 1983; Farber, 1959).

Results relating to the effect of the sex of the parent are conflicting. Several studies have found no differences in stress patterns when mothers and fathers are compared (e.g., Van Rooyen, 1989) while others report differences (e.g., Hersh, 1970). However, the sex of the parent as a variable has been neglected as most studies have excluded fathers from their sample (Cummings, 1976). Results relating to the effect of ethnic group membership of the handicapped child are also conflicting (e.g., Van Rooyen & Luiz, 1989; Waisbren, 1980).

It is thus apparent that further research is needed in the area of family stress associated with a handicapped child. Such research should follow the recent trend in research and adopt a multivariate approach and, most importantly, it should improve on previous methodology.

In constructing the present research undertaking, the factors described above were taken into consideration. The specific aims of the study were to:

- compare the QRS responses of parents of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, diabetic, allergic and non-handicapped children in order to locate the various stressors;
- study the extent to which the following variables, namely ethnic group, age of child, sex of child and sex of parent, affect these various stressors.

2. METHOD

2.1 *RESEARCH DESIGN*

In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims, a quasi-experimental research design (Campbell & Stanley, 1966) was employed, permitting a comparison of the stress and resources of parents of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, diabetic, allergic and non-handicapped or healthy children as measured on the QRS. This analysis was done for a white and a black sample.

The QRS responses were compared (i) across identity groups (viz., parents of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, diabetic, allergic and non-handicapped children) for the white and black sample separately and (ii) across ethnic groups (i.e., black and white parents of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, diabetic, allergic and non-handicapped children). Furthermore, (iii) age of the child, (iv) sex of the child, (v) sex of the parent and (vi) socio-economic status of the family were investigated in order to establish whether these variables were associated with differential stress and resource patterns.

Comparisons were done between, as well as within, groups and the overall design could be described as a between- and within-group quasi-experimental design. Identity and ethnic grouping are subject variables which could not be manipulated or controlled for by the researcher and were therefore employed as non-manipulated independent variables. For purposes of control, subjects in each of the experimental groups were matched on a number of variables.

Matching by equating subjects allows for controlling extraneous variables and increasing the sensitivity of the experiment. Christensen (1988) described two techniques commonly used to accomplish this matching, namely, the precision control technique and the frequency control technique. The precision control technique requires of the investigator to match subjects in the various treatment groups on a case-by-case basis for each of the selected extraneous variables and by implication is a stringent method. However, a problem encountered in precision control matching is that the difficulty in finding matched subjects increases disproportionately as the number of variables increases. Thus in order to match individuals on many variables, one must have a large pool of subjects available in order to obtain a few who are matched on the relevant variables.

The frequency distribution technique, as the name implies, matches groups of subjects in terms of overall distribution of the selected variable or variables rather than on a case-by-case basis. This implies that the investigator would select the first group of subjects and determine the mean, standard deviation and other descriptive statistics of the relevant variable. Then another group having the same statistical measures would be selected. The number of subjects lost using this technique would not be as great as the number lost using the precision control method, because each additional subject would merely have to contribute to producing the appropriate statistical indices rather than be identical to another subject on the relevant variables. Consequently, this technique is more flexible than the precision control method in terms of being able to use a particular subject. The major disadvantage of matching by the frequency distribution control method is that if matching is conducted on more than one variable, the combinations of variables may be mismatched in the various groups.

Thus a decision to use the precision control method of matching has the implication of stringent matching but limited sample size, whereas the decision to use frequency distribution matching increases the sample size but reduces the stringency of the matching. The choice of using only one of these methods would certainly compromise the present study especially as its aim was to provide the controls that were absent in previous cross-ethnic studies. As a measure of security, it was decided to use both methods in the present study and thus both a precision control sample and a frequency control sample were utilized. The frequency distribution technique was used where the various ethnic groups were compared with each other and the precision control technique was used for the various comparisons within each ethnic and identity group.

2.2 SUBJECTS

The total subject pool consisted of 1 621 subjects. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the sample composition regarding identity and ethnic groupings.

Table 1: Sample composition

	N = 1 621			
	White		Black	
	n	%	n	%
Mentally retarded	296	18,2	241	14,9
Physically handicapped	111	6,8	131	8,1
Diabetic	68	4,2	65	4,0
Allergic	58	3,6	161	9,9
Non-handicapped	249	15,4	241	14,9

A specification of the subject characteristics of the sample is presented below.

2.2.1 *Group Identity*

Group identity was employed as a non-manipulated independent variable and subjects were selected and stratified according to the various levels of the relevant subject variables included in the study. A definition of the five identity groups follows.

- ***Mentally retarded sample***

This sample comprised parents of mildly and moderately mentally retarded children and adhered to the criteria as laid down by the American Psychiatric

Association (APA) (1987), namely mild retardation (IQ 50-70), which is the equivalent of the educational category of educable, and moderate mental retardation (IQ 35-49), which is the educational category of trainable. The majority of these children (especially in the white sample) were attending training centres.

- ***Physically handicapped sample***

In their report on the physically disabled in South Africa Hattingh *et al.* (1987:2) gave the following definition:

> Physically disabled people are people who are born with a physical impairment or who have a physical limitation such as anatomical loss of major extremities; paralysis, physiological disorders or any other conditions affecting important body systems, due to illness or injury. There is thus limited mobility as well as limitations of one or more major life activities. The physical conditions may continue indefinitely.

The research sample was comprised of parents of physically handicapped children, the latter meeting the above mentioned definition. The majority of these children (especially in the white sample) attended schools that cater specifically for them.

- ***Diabetic sample***

The essential and defining feature of the subjects in the diabetic sample was a medical diagnosis of diabetes mellitus. To be included in the sample the child had to be receiving medical attention for the condition.

- ***Allergic sample***

The essential and defining feature of the subjects in the allergic sample was a medical diagnosis and treatment of a chronic allergic condition. This allergic condition could be any one or several of the known allergic reactions to allergens in the environment, that is, asthma/hayfever, food allergy, skin allergy and insect bites/stings.

- ***Non-handicapped sample***

This sample was comprised of parents of non-handicapped healthy children who were not mentally retarded or physically handicapped and had no history of chronic allergic reactions or any other form of chronic illness, emotional problems or learning disability. These children were attending primary and secondary schools.

2.2.2 *Control of extraneous variables*

The five identity groups (i.e., parents of mentally retarded, physically handicapped, diabetic, allergic and non-handicapped children) were matched in terms of the sex of the child; the sex of the parent; the age of the child (i.e., subjects were divided into three groups according to the developmental stage of their children, viz., early childhood, 5 years - 7 years 11 months; middle childhood, 8 years - 11 years 11 months; and adolescence, 12 years - 18 years). The identity groups were then matched in terms of age and the socio-economic status of the family according to Riordan's (1978) classification.

The children all resided at home and in urban areas. It was decided to keep these variables constant in order to account for variation that could be due to them. The following extraneous variables were not accounted for: marital status of the parents, birth order of the child and the number of siblings in the family. Whilst it is acknowledged that these variables may influence stress patterns, to control for them in addition to the above-mentioned variables would reduce the sample size significantly and render a meaningful statistical analysis of the data impossible. Nevertheless, they may not have resulted in serious error variance as it is possible that these variables were fairly evenly distributed within the five groups.

2.3 *MEASURE*

The QRS as a measuring instrument has already been discussed. It can however be added that the QRS appears to be an appropriate measure of family stress for the following reasons:

1. The QRS provides information regarding various problem areas for the respondent, the family, and the disabled child.
2. By means of the QRS the researcher can compare various disabilities, for example mental retardation versus chronic illness. Treatment effects can also be compared.
3. By applying the QRS the professional can determine which family problems need urgent attention.

2.4 *PROCEDURE*

Permission to send the questionnaire to parents with a physically disabled, mentally retarded, diabetic or allergic child was obtained from the relevant education departments and outpatient departments of certain provincial hospitals. The co-operation of principals of schools and medical doctors at hospitals in the Eastern and Western Cape was obtained. They were asked to request the co-operation of the parents of their pupils/patients. After consent was obtained from the principals and medical practitioners the parents were approached. By means of a covering letter from the Department of Psychology at the University of Port Elizabeth the parents were informed about the nature and purpose of the research study and each parent was requested to complete the QRS. The telephone numbers of the researchers were included for further enquiries. Biographical information sheets and questionnaires were enclosed with the letters. The mother and father received separate questionnaires. No personal identification was required on the answer sheets and a predetermined code was used to identify the completed questionnaire which ensured confidentiality of information. In order to secure the correct completion of the answer sheets a qualified Xhosa-speaking professional nurse was employed to administer the QRS items individually to black parents who were unable to complete the questionnaire on their own. Black subjects were also drawn from the local community by a Xhosa-speaking teacher and a fieldworker. They used both church group gatherings, parent-teacher meetings and home visits to obtain the data.

The questionnaires were scored and the profiles completed strictly according to the manual. The scored questionnaires and plotted profiles were then statistically analyzed by the research section of the Department of Psychology of the University of Port Elizabeth.

2.5 *STATISTICAL ANALYSIS*

This research task is currently in progress. Multivariate techniques (analyses of variance), Hotelling's T^2 tests, post-hoc *t* tests with Bonferroni's inequality, and stepwise discriminant analyses are being employed in the analysis of the data. The analyses are being performed on the raw scores obtained on each of the QRS scales.

3. RESULTS

Preliminary results indicate that the QRS has differentiated between identity groups and ethnic groups. However, the statistical analysis of the total data is not yet complete and the results will be comprehensively presented and discussed in the final report.

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III

Support systems for children of divorce

Diane Braude

I will begin with a general orientation to my investigation. I will then present my findings, and following that I will discuss the main trends which have emerged.

Orientation to the investigation

I will discuss the orientation to the investigation under the following headings: research subject, personal motivation for the study, objectives, research domain, methodology and limitations.

1. RESEARCH SUBJECT

According to the Central Statistical Service (1990) the number of children involved in divorce increased considerably in South Africa from 1985 to 1989. Burman and Fuchs (1986) stated that between 1978 and 1982 divorce rates for whites in South Africa increased by 47%. They suggested that if existing divorce rates remained the same as in 1982 the probability was that 1 in 2.24 marriages would culminate at some time in divorce. The trends in South Africa follow closely those in Western overseas countries. Paul Glick (1979) concluded from his demographic projections that by the 1990s close to one-third of children in the USA might be expected to experience a parent's divorce before they reach the age of 18.

There is widespread recognition that divorce represents one of the major stresses of modern social experience (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). Divorce implies not only the end of a primary socio-personal relationship, but also impairs the broader social network of which the couple has been part.

Most children experience divorce as a transitional crisis (Hetherington, 1979; Ahrons, 1980; Carter & McGoldrick, 1980). In most crisis situations, such as death or natural disasters, parents reach out to their children to attend to their children's needs first. In divorce, parents focus initially on their own problems, resulting in a weakened capacity to parent and less support being given than the children need (Walczak & Burns, 1984; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1989).

Mutual tasks for the individual and the environment occur at every stage of the lifespan and of the family. Divorce creates additional tasks. The achievement of these tasks is the joint responsibility of society (including professions such as social work), the individual and the family (Carter & McGoldrick, 1980; Hartman & Laird, 1983; Zastrow, 1990). According to developmental and ecological perspectives, problems are not the results of individual difficulties only but also of shortfalls, discrepancies, conflict and the absence of a fit in the environment or in the transactions between systems, e.g. family and other systems such as political, economic, educational, medical, legal and social systems. Consequently, failure to adjust to divorce can be construed as due to lack of positive systems in the social environment as much as to individual inadequacy. Research often views the "single-parent" family as a pathogenic family and has failed to focus on how positive family functioning and support systems can facilitate the development of social, emotional and intellectual competence in children of single-parent families (Hetherington, 1979).

It has been estimated that children spend approximately 15 000 hours at school from age five until school leaving (Rutter, 1980). Teachers and other school personnel are therefore in a prime position to observe behavioural changes caused by divorce and to offer support. An investigation into the role of the school, as one of the support systems theoretically available to children of divorce, was therefore considered important for this study.

There is a large gap in our knowledge about the child's view of divorce. The focus has been mainly on adult studies (Walczak & Burns, 1984). For this reason I have focused the present research on the children's views of support systems or networks available to them when their parents divorce. It was also considered important for the sake of completeness to interview the custodial parents. Because the latter are involved on a daily basis with their children they are in a good position to comment on the support available to and used by them. This is not to suggest that the perceptions of non-custodial parents are not important. This was however considered to be beyond the scope of the present study.

2. PERSONAL MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

I have worked as a social worker in a private community school for the past nine years. My professional interaction with children of divorced parents has highlighted the need for emotional and social support for such children, support which, it would appear from practice, is not always forthcoming. It was from these observations that the notion of investigating the support systems that are available to children of divorce arose.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this investigation were:

(i) To examine the perceptions of both children and their custodial parents of the implication of the divorce for the life situation of the children and of the support systems or networks available to and utilized by them. Consideration is given to: the children's preparedness for divorce and its consequences, and informal and formal support systems, the latter including the school.

(ii) Arising from this, to measure the degree of consensus between the perceptions of the custodial parents and the elder child.

(iii) To assess the potential use of the ecomap as an independent research tool.

(iv) To make recommendations based on the findings as to how appropriate professionals can contribute towards maximizing support for children of divorce.

It should be noted that the findings relating to the ecomap formed a minor part of the research and are not reported in this paper. Moreover, recommendations for professionals were not complete at the time this paper was delivered. The results presented here therefore relate to the first two of these objectives.

4. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Some of the key concepts used in this paper are defined as follows:

- ▷ Divorce: This term refers to the legal dissolution of a marriage. For the purposes of this research divorce is regarded as a process which spans the duration from the time of separation through to the period after the legal divorce. For the child there is often no distinction between the separation and the legal divorce. Both represent a time of stress, during which support is needed.
- ▷ Divorced family: A family which has undergone a split as a result of the parents' divorce.
- ▷ Support networks or support systems: These terms are used interchangeably to indicate social interconnections which are considered by the individuals to be socially and emotionally supportive.
- ▷ Social and emotional support: These terms refer to the strength and sustenance that individuals provide for each other through their interactions. There is no clear-cut difference between the two expressions and for the purposes of the present study the one often implies the other.
- ▷ Custodial parent: The parent who at the time of the divorce was awarded by the courts legal responsibility for the daily care of the child. In the present study all custodial parents were mothers and therefore the terms "custodial parents" and "mothers" are used interchangeably in reference to the sample.
- ▷ Non-custodial parent: The parent who has not been awarded legal responsibility for the daily care of the child.
- ▷ Children of divorce: Children whose parents are divorced.

5. RESEARCH DOMAIN

Children in the sample were from one of three King David Primary Schools in Johannesburg. The King David Schools are Jewish community schools under the auspices of the South African Board of Jewish Education.

6. METHODOLOGY

6.1 *SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHODS*

It was intended to interview children aged 9-11 years whose parents had been divorced 0-2 years; however, due to the difficulty of finding sufficient children who met these criteria, the time period of divorce and the age range had to be extended. The final sample was composed of 63 primary school children between the age of 7 and 13 and 44 custodial parents (mothers) who had been divorced 0-5 years. There were 19 pairs of siblings. Two fathers who were custodial parents were contacted. However, they did not meet all the specified criteria and were therefore not included in the sample. On reflection the researcher would not have included them in the sample anyway unless an equal number of custodial fathers and custodial mothers could have been included, in numbers sufficiently large to validate comparisons.

6.2 *MEASURING INSTRUMENTS*

The measuring instruments used for data collection in the empirical research were two interview schedules, one for children and one for custodial parents, and an ecomap. The ecomap was completed by children at the conclusion of the scheduled conversation. It provided a pictorial representation of the strength of the children's relationships in their networks.

7. LIMITATIONS

The following limitations are inherent in the study:

(i) I am unaware of any research having been conducted in South Africa which has focused either on support systems for children of divorce or on divorce in the Jewish community, from which I could have drawn.

(ii) Conclusions from this study are based largely on the subjective perceptions of children and their custodial parents (in this case mothers). The responses may be confounded by certain response sets such as social desirability or acquiescence. The latter could particularly apply to children.

(iii) Because of the difficulty in obtaining an adequate sample size of respondents who met the original criteria, I was compelled to extend the timespan since divorce and the age range of the children. This had further implications. The time lapse between parental divorce and the interview with some of the children may have influenced how much the children remembered and led to changes in the perceptions of the respondents. In some instances the age of the children at the time of the divorce resulted in those children answering "don't remember". Contingency questions were then used and involved a smaller number of respondents than the original sample.

(iv) Every effort was made to obtain the maximum number of respondents who fulfilled the specified criteria. The sample size, particularly when contingency questions were used, reduced the generalizability of the sample. The sample is representative of one particular socio-economic and cultural group of children which precludes generalization of the results to the total population (external validity).

(v) The investigation would have been richer had the perceptions of the non-custodial parents been obtained. As mentioned previously this was however considered beyond the scope of the study.

(vi) The design is an exploratory-descriptive one. It is also known as *ex post facto* design. In any *ex post facto* design there is a lack of control of extraneous variables such as social background. It is possible for example that divorce in previous generations could affect perceptions. However, by delimiting the sample in terms of socio-economic status, age and length of divorce, nuisance variables were to some degree controlled.

Presentation of findings

I will discuss my findings under the following headings: biographical and demographical data, preparedness of children for the divorce, children's perceptions of their use of informal support systems, children's perceptions of their use of formal support systems, children's suggestions as to informal and formal support systems, custodial parents' perceptions of informal and formal support systems, and the school as a support system.

1. BIOGRAPHICAL AND DEMOGRAPHICAL DATA OF THE SAMPLE

The proportion of girls and boys was approximately equal with slightly more girls (33 girls, 52%) than boys (30 boys, 48%). There were approximately equal proportions of boys and girls in each of two age subgroups, that is 7-9 years and 10-13 years. All the children with the exception of four (6%) lived with one or more sibling.

There were approximately equal proportions of children whose parents had been divorced less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 2-3 years, 3-4 years and 4-5 years. The average duration of marriage prior to divorce was 10.59 years with a standard deviation of 3.81 years. Although there was a wide range of years married (1-17 years), only a small number of parents (four, 9%) had been married for five years or fewer prior to divorce.

Three-quarters of the mothers were between the ages of 31 and 40 years. Nearly all had achieved either matriculation (43%) or a tertiary qualification (45%). Their occupations were categorized into secretarial, technical/sales and managerial/professional. More mothers (19 mothers, 43%) were in technical/ sales orientated jobs than in any other category. Just over half (24 mothers, 55%) were employed full time at the time of the interview. The remainder were in part-time employment. Half of the mothers received an income of between R36 000 and R60 999. About 30% received between R20 999 and R35 999, and 20% received less than R20 999 (11%) or more than R60 999(9%).

2. PREPAREDNESS OF CHILDREN FOR THE DIVORCE

I consider the extent to which parents prepare children for divorce to constitute a measure of support for that child. Preparation includes providing the child with a reasonable explanation of the divorce according to his developmental level as well as of the consequences for that child. Preparedness of children for the divorce is their readiness for the divorce of their parents. My years of clinical experience have shown me that children are not adequately, if at all, prepared by parents for the divorce and for its outcome. The inadequate preparation on the part of parents contributes to children feeling insecure, abandoned, confused and overwhelmed, resulting in a lack of clarity about the immediate future, a tendency to fantasize and an inability to accept and communicate their feelings. Through an analysis of the responses of the children I explored the preparedness of children for the divorce of their parents and their understanding of the meaning of divorce and its consequences for them. Parents' perceptions of the preparedness of their children for divorce and its consequences were explored in order to measure the degree of consensus between parents' and children's perceptions on this issue.

2.1 *CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE MEANING OF THE TERM "DIVORCE"*

The explanations of the term provided by children were many. In decreasing order of frequency, divorce was conceptualized as: separation (75%), when parents haven't got a good marriage (16%), when one parent did not live with them (3%) and sadness (2%). Three children (5%) could not answer the question.

2.2 *CHILDREN'S REACTIONS ON REALIZING THAT THEIR PARENTS WERE GOING TO DIVORCE*

Children were asked, "Were you surprised when you realized that your parents had been going to get a divorce?" Approximately two-thirds reported having been surprised. Reasons given for being surprised were that they knew their parents were fighting but did not think that it would result in divorce, and that they did not know that their parents were fighting. Reasons given for not being surprised were that they had heard their parents fight and that there had been talk about divorce. It appears from the findings that often even when children are aware of the conflict between parents they do not anticipate divorce. Parents therefore cannot assume that the child's knowledge of conflict between them is an assurance for the expectation of divorce.

2.3 *PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE CHILD PRIOR TO THE DIVORCE*

The children were asked if they had been told about the divorce of their parents before the divorce. Only one-third of the children (21 children, 33%) said that they had been told prior to one parent moving out. Comments from children who had **not** been told before included "I started looking for Dad's clothes and discovered that they were not there", and "My mother fetched me from school and told me that Dad had gone to live somewhere else". Identification of the person who told the child about the divorce provides the researcher with a measure of the source of support at the time. Twenty-one children (33%) said that they had been told about the divorce by their mothers as compared with only nine (14%) who said that they had been told by their fathers. Eight children (13%) claimed to have been informed by both parents. The remaining children did not remember or did not know.

2.4 *PREPARING THE CHILD FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DIVORCE*

The mother featured more often than the father in communicating the consequences of divorce. Sixteen children (25%) said that their mother had communicated with them about the consequences of the divorce whilst only five children (8%) cited the father in this regard. For the vast majority (93%) of the children, being prepared for the consequences meant being told when and how often they would see their father.

2.5 *COMPARISONS BETWEEN THE PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTS AND CHILDREN CONCERNING THE CHILDREN'S PREPAREDNESS FOR THE DIVORCE*

In analyzing any association between parents and children the responses of the parent and the elder child were considered so as not to bias results in favour of parents with more than one child.

Responses on certain items were cross-tabulated. The responses are shown in Table 1, Table 2 and Table 3.

From Table 1 it can be seen that there is consensus in 24 cases (55%). Eighteen pairs of parents and children (41%) agreed that the divorce came as a surprise while six pairs agreed that there was no surprise. In ten cases parents did not think that their children were surprised; their children, however, said that they were surprised.

TABLE 1 CROSS-TABULATION OF PERCEPTIONS OF WHETHER CHILDREN WERE SURPRISED BY THE DIVORCE
N = 44 pairs

Parents' perceptions **Children's perceptions**	Yes	No	Don/t know	**Total**
Yes	18	10	1	**29**
No	5	6	0	**11**
Don't remember	4	0	0	**4**
TOTAL	**27**	**16**	**1**	**44**

Children were asked "Who told you about the divorce?" Parents were asked "Who explained to the child that his/her parents were getting divorced?" The responses are presented in Table 2.

From Table 2 it is evident that there was little agreement between parents and the elder child on the person who explained about the divorce. There was consensus in only 12 cases (27%). In only two pairs (5%) was there agreement that both parents had told the children of the divorce. From the perceptions of both the mother and the elder child it is evident that children were told most frequently by the mother. However, more mothers, that is 23 (52%), perceived themselves as having told their children about the divorce than their children perceived them to have done (15 children, 34%). This discrepancy may be due to a social desirability factor in the responses of mothers.

TABLE 2 CROSS-TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS REGARDING WHO TOLD CHILDREN ABOUT THE DIVORCE
N = 44 pairs

Parent's perceptions **Children's perceptions**	Mother	Both parents	Father	Mother & Psycho-logist	No-one	**Total**
Mother	9	5	0	0	1	**15**
Both parents	4	2	0	0	0	**6**
Father	4	2	1	0	1	**8**
No-one	3	1	1	1	0	**6**
Don't remember	3	4	0	1	1	**9**
TOTAL	**23**	**14**	**2**	**2**	**3**	**44**

In Table 3 the consensus on the child's understanding of the divorce is presented.

According to the findings from this table there was little agreement between the parents and the children. Almost half of the children believed that they understood the explanations, compared with ten parents (23%) who believed that their children understood. In 14 cases (32%) the parents did not think the children understood but the children believed that they did.

TABLE 3 CROSS-TABULATION OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON CHILD'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE DIVORCE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS
N = 44 pairs

Parents' perceptions / **Children's perceptions**	Yes	No	Don/t know	**Total**
Yes	4	14	2	**20**
No	3	8	1	**12**
Don't remember	3	8	1	**12**
TOTAL	**10**	**30**	**4**	**44**

3. CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR USE OF INFORMAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

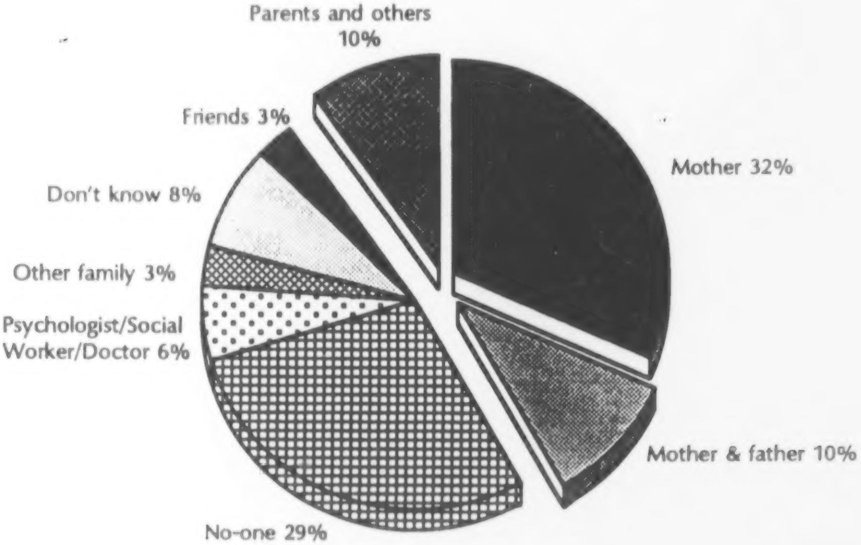
Informal support systems in the present research refers to support from family, friends and neighbours.

3.1 *SUPPORT FROM PARENTS*

3.1.1 *Confidant of the children at the time of the divorce*

The children were asked with whom they had shared their feelings when they had realized that their parents had been getting divorced. The responses to the question are found in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 PIEGRAPH SHOWING RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF CONSULTATION OF CONFIDANT (N = 63)



From the above figure it can be seen that as many as 18 children (29%) did not share their feelings with anyone. The most frequent response was 'mother' (20 children, 32%). Only six children (10%) spoke to both parents and none spoke only to their father. An analysis was made of the relationship between the gender of the child and their confidant. A similar proportion of boys and girls named their mother as their main confidant (nine boys, 30%, and ten girls, 30%). Irrespective of gender, therefore, more of the children who confided in someone confided in their mother than in any other person.

3.1.2 *Children's perceptions of whether they have been able to discuss their feelings about the divorce with their parents*

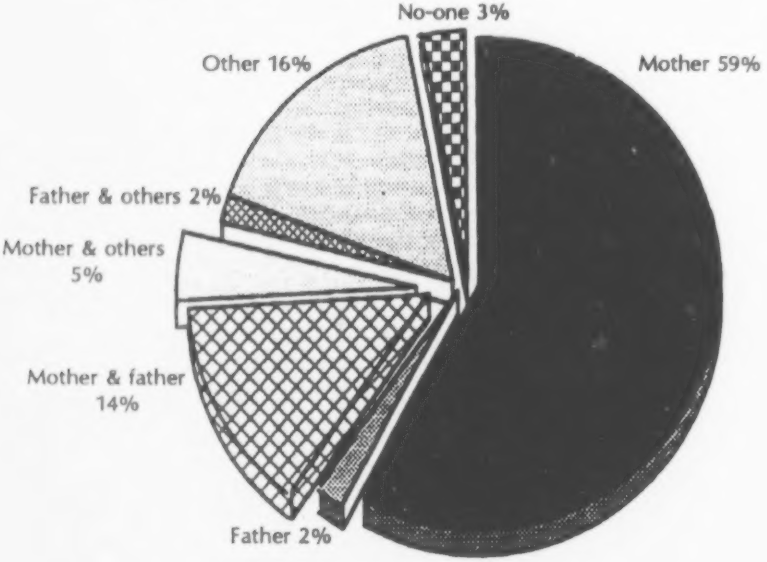
Over two-thirds of the children (43 children, 68%) were able to talk to their mothers about their feelings about the divorce. Under half of the children (31 children, 49%) were able to talk to their fathers about their feelings. The majority of children found it helpful to talk to mothers and fathers (40 children, 93%, and 24 children, 80%, respectively). Slightly more girls (74%) than boys (63%) said that they could talk to their mothers and fathers about their feelings.

3.1.3 *Family member most easily conversed with as a confidant*

The mother featured much more frequently than the father as the family member most easily conversed with (60% and 8% respectively).

3.1.4 *Person(s) considered to be the most helpful*

FIGURE 2 PIEGRAPH OF THE RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF THE PERSON WHO HELPED THE MOST (N = 63)



The children were asked to specify the person who had helped them the most since the divorce. The responses are categorized and presented in the form of a piegraph (Figure 2).

From an examination of Figure 2 it can be seen that the mother was to a large extent the person whom the child considered to have been most helpful. Over three-quarters of the children (49 children, 78%) cited their mother alone or in combination with others. Eleven children (18%) considered their father to have been the most helpful alone or in combination.

3.2 *SUPPORT FROM GRANDPARENTS*

Working with children of divorce I have found that grandparents are often in a position to play a vital role in providing support to children and their divorced parents. I therefore investigated the supportive role of maternal and paternal grandparents when parents get divorced.

3.2.1 *Number of grandparents deceased, living near or far*

There was a slightly higher percentage of deceased paternal grandparents than deceased maternal grandparents. All distances within an hour's travelling time by car from the child's home were considered to be near. Most grandparents lived near to their grandchildren, but more maternal grandparents (50, 85%) lived near than did paternal grandparents (37, 69%).

3.2.2 *Communication about the divorce between grandparents and grandchildren*

Approximately three-quarters of the children (46 children, 73%) reported that they had not talked to their grandparents about the divorce. Of the 17 who had spoken to grandparents about the divorce, 15 (88%) had spoken to a maternal grandparent. Most often the maternal grandmother was confided in rather than the maternal grandfather (11 out of 15, 73%). In order to gain insight into the role that the grandparents play in providing emotional support, the children were asked the kinds of things that they found helpful to discuss.

Over half of the children who had confided in grandparents found it helpful to discuss their problems and feelings. The girl who said that it wasn't helpful gave as a reason that her grandmother "takes sides".

3.2.3 *Grandparent perceived to be the most helpful*

The relative importance of maternal and paternal grandparents was considered *via* the children's responses to whether there was one grandparent or grandparents who helped the most. Of the 46 (73%) who said there were, 34 (74%) specified the maternal grandparents as the most helpful.

3.3 *SUPPORT FROM SIBLINGS, FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS*

Nearly two-thirds of the children had not spoken to their siblings about the divorce. Reasons included: "It's hard to get on with him or her", "I hate my brother - my ex-brother", "She feels different from me", and "He will tell others".

Thirteen children (21%) stated that no siblings were involved in help with homework, either alone, or together with both parents (two children, 3%).

One third remembered having confided in a friend about the divorce at the time of the divorce, whilst over half of the children (34 children, 54%) reported having confided in a friend since the divorce. More children (54%) confided in a friend since the divorce than at the time of the divorce (33%).

Most children (92%) said that they knew other children whose parents were divorced. Of these, almost three-quarters found this helpful. However, only just over one-third (21 children, 36%) had discussed their experiences with others.

Many more children perceived the friends of their mothers as available to provide support than the friends of their fathers (30 children, 48%, and six, 20%, respectively). Of those children who perceived their parents' friends as available to them, few utilized the support (six children, 20%, for mothers and three children, 25%, for fathers).

Although the majority of children (43 children, 68%) stated that they or their family were on friendly terms with their neighbours, only 23 (37%) stated that they could request help from them. Half of the 40 children who did not believe that they could approach a neighbour for help thought that it would have been helpful if they could have.

4. CHILDREN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR USE OF FORMAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Investigation of formal support systems included religious leaders, medical doctors, discussion groups, single-parent organizations and professional helpers.

Religious leaders and medical doctors were hardly ever consulted by the children concerning the divorce of their parents. Only three children (5%) consulted a religious leader and only four (7%) a medical doctor. Six children (13%) belonged to a formal group where divorce was discussed. Only three children (5%) reported that they and their parents had ever belonged to a single-parent organization. Professional helpers however were seen much more frequently. Over two-thirds (68%) said that they had spoken to a professional helper (psychologist or social worker). Forty out of the 43 children (93%) considered that talking to a psychologist or social worker had been helpful. These 40 children were requested to specify what kinds of things they found helpful to discuss. The majority (31 children, 78%) said talking about their feelings, six (15%) said that it had helped by clarifying issues and three (8%) did not know.

5. CUSTODIAL PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF INFORMAL AND FORMAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

I will highlight some aspects of the mothers' perceptions:

5.1 *THE EXTENT TO WHICH MOTHERS WERE ABLE TO PROVIDE EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO THEIR CHILDREN*

The mothers were asked to indicate on a five-point Likert scale the degree of emotional support they were able to give to their children at the time of their divorce. Most of the mothers (87%) indicated that they were able to provide support either a good part, most, or all of the time. Six mothers (14%) claimed that their limited support to their children was the result of emotional strain.

5.2 *EXTENT TO WHICH CHILDREN RECEIVED SUPPORT FROM OTHERS IN THEIR SOCIAL SYSTEM*

Mothers were asked to rate to what extent they perceived the children to have received support from significant others. According to the mothers the children received more support from maternal, than paternal, relatives and friends. There was a tendency for mothers to perceive the support from their friends to be greater than the children perceived it to be (compare Section 3.3). There was however agreement between parents and children that support from maternal grandparents was greater than from paternal grandparents (see Section 3.2).

Mothers were then asked about siblings, and about formal support systems. By far the highest number of responses was recorded in respect of siblings (64%); this degree of support, as perceived by the mothers, was far greater than indicated by the children (see Section 3.3).

5.3 *FACTORS OR PEOPLE CONSIDERED IMPORTANT FOR THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING OF A CHILD OF DIVORCE*

Mothers were given the opportunity to make comments about social and emotional support for a child of divorce. Each mother gave up to two comments. The three categories mentioned most frequently were: increased professional help (14 mothers, 23%), the need for co-operation of both parents (12 mothers, 19%) and the importance of a stable home life (ten mothers, 16%).

6. THE SCHOOL AS A SUPPORT SYSTEM

Although children are involved with school and school related activities for a considerable part of their waking hours (Keniston, 1978; Rutter 1980; Drake, 1981) the supportive role of the school has not been researched. Instead research has been focused on the home environment at the various stages of divorce. The impact of the home life on the child should not be understated but it is precisely when there is a breakdown in the home that the school becomes a valuable resource. In the wake of a transitional crisis school is often the one constant in children's lives, providing structure when the other major structure in their lives is weakening. A focus of the present research is the assessment of the supportive role of the school from the perspective of the children and from that of their custodial parents.

The children and the custodial parents were asked about the supportive role of the school.

Divorce treated as part of the curriculum was seen as helpful by fewer than half of the children who remembered such a lesson. It appears, however, that although children expect that they would not like their teachers talking to them about the divorce, a high percentage feel comfortable when their teachers do speak to them. When asked which adult in the school they could approach to discuss problems and feelings most children cited the school social worker or psychologist. Of the 42 children who were able to make suggestions as to how the school could be helpful, most (29 children, 69%) made suggestions for there to be increased emotional support.

Over half of the custodial parents (23 parents, 52%) perceived the support from the school to be positive (that is, a good part, most or all of the time), and, more specifically, 71% perceived the child's teacher at the time of the divorce to have been supportive. In answer to a separate question, 80% described the school's attitude towards divorced parents and their families as accepting.

Discussion of main trends

As I explained earlier, work on my thesis is not yet complete and I am therefore not in a position to make recommendations for initiatives or future study. All I can do at this stage is indicate which findings appear to be particularly revealing.

1. PREPAREDNESS OF CHILDREN FOR DIVORCE

The first finding to emerge from the investigation confirming a general impression which I already had from social work practice was that children are ill-prepared for divorce. Perhaps even more noteworthy was the lack of consensus between specific children and their parents.

For example, some children (ten out of 44) claimed to have been surprised by their parents' divorce, a view not echoed by their parents. Even more startling is the fact that nearly three-quarters of the child/parent pairs did not agree on the question of who had told the child about the divorce. This reflects a strong lack of communication at this stressful time.

2. INFORMAL SUPPORT

With regard to the children's perceptions of support from family and friends, the mother emerged as the predominant person. Over three-quarters of the children considered the mother alone or in combination with others to have been the person who helped the most. This was confirmed by the mothers' own perceptions of their ability to give support to their children.

Moreover, in so far as children considered grandparents or parents' friends to be a source of support, they most often named maternal grandparents or mothers' friends. This serves to confirm the importance of the mother in the life situation of these children. It should be remembered of course that in this sample all the custodial parents were mothers.

It appears however that children make relatively little use of such other support. For example, with regard to grandparents we observed that most of the children who spoke to a grandparent about the divorce spoke to a maternal grandparent. Only about a quarter of the children, however, had spoken to a grandparent at all. It appears that most children do not perceive the role of grandparents in this way. Is this not an untapped source of emotional support?

It also emerged that more use could be made of the support of siblings and friends. One-third of the children reported having confided in a friend at the time of the divorce. Only slightly more (39%) had spoken to siblings. More children (just over half) had confided in a friend since the divorce. It appears therefore that as time progressed the children felt more able to utilize peer support. It is interesting to note, however, that the mothers perceived sibling support to be greater than the children indicated.

3. FORMAL SUPPORT

Parents and children agreed that little support was provided by rabbis, doctors or groups. Over two-thirds of the children, however, had used the services of a professional helper and nearly all of them found it helpful, more so than the parents perceived.

4. THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL

It was shown that most mothers think of turning to the school for support for their children and moreover expressed satisfaction with the support received.

It also emerged that more children were comfortable with support received than they had anticipated. By contrast, however, few children saw substantial value in lessons about divorce in the curriculum. Individual support at appropriate times was more appreciated. The suggestion most frequently made as to how the school could be helpful was for emotional support.

These findings serve to confirm that the school is a very important source of support for children in times of crisis. This support system is worthy of careful consideration and development.

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* The research on which this paper has been based, was completed in 1992 and the final report is available at the HSRC, Pretoria.

IV

Children and the family in a rural settlement in Gazankulu[1]

JC Kotzé

Introduction

This paper focuses on the cultural knowledge and social practice which bear on the experience and position of children as members of families in the social context of a settlement called Dixie on the eastern border of the Mhala district of Gazankulu, where I have been doing research since 1985.[2] I understand cultural knowledge and social practice in Dixie to be shaped by economic conditions to a significant degree, not because I wish to advance the theoretical argument that culture is determined by material conditions, but in the sense of severe economic constraints imposed on social life. Life in Dixie is in fact at the same time profoundly materialist and social. It is pervasively imbued with materialist considerations since material constraints do not permit preoccupation with much more than the most basic needs. By the same token the lack of material security is culturally counteracted by social strategies.[3]

My own perception of social life in Dixie has been shaped and transformed over time by two consecutive but divergent phases of participant observation. During the first phase, 1985 until 1988, scientific experience and the experience of affluent suburban life dominated my perception of everyday life in the settlement. Since then, as my experience and understanding, and children's refusal to allow me to behave objectively, grew, my perception of this social life became transformed by subjective living with children[4] mostly. During the first phase, trying to resolve the bewildering ambiguity inherent in acting as social participant and objective observer at the same time, I was as much confused by the peculiarities of social life in Dixie as I confused the members of this little settlement. The differences in the experience between the social contexts from which I come and that presented by a place like Dixie are so vast that the mutual perceptual incompatibilities cannot be resolved beyond a superficial level by a detached observer's observations from an objective vantage point or a respondent's (a formal position) answers to a researcher's (another formal position) questions. Yet, the economic conditions shaping my own family life are so different from those shaping family life and children's position in Dixie, that I cannot master the latter's cultural knowledge sufficiently to participate with grace in any but a peripheral social position in Dixie. But without the interaction of our experiences in ordinary, mundane life affairs I would not have had the experience of being psychologically assaulted by children forcing their habits on me, neither of the contradictions in our perceptions of life flowing from divergent experiences. I would not have appreciated the actuality of the forces in their lives through my own "otherness" in Dixie, rather than merely in terms of their "otherness".

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[1] All notes are at the end of the chapter.

A few perspectives are crucial to an understanding of the social phenomena *vana* (sing.: *n'wana* - "children") and *ndyangu* (pl.: *mindyangu* - "family") in Dixie: the villagers' employment relationship with nearby game reserves, the social relationships between male and female adults (*lava kulu*) and their cultural meaning.

The social universe

Wedged in between the Manyelethi and Sabi Sand game reserves in the Eastern Transvaal Lowveld, in the remote eastern corner of the Mhala district of Gazankulu, Dixie is unique in several respects. Though politically part of Gazankulu, it is socially very much a part of the surrounding game farms ("safari lodges") where virtually all the employed villagers work. The villagers' economic and social involvement with game reserves — which encourages rural values and skills — and their geographic isolation and relative indifference to education, are mutually reinforcing factors. Since a very small proportion of Mhala's population are suitably equipped for, or willing to subject themselves to, the kind of job opportunities provided by game reserves, the villagers of Dixie have experienced virtually no unemployment since fieldwork started in 1985. In addition, a comparatively large percentage of Dixie's female population (around 63% from the age of 20 years) are employed by the game reserves. In this regard the position of Dixie is in contrast to situations in homelands generally where unemployment is high and where women, having few alternatives, are acutely dependent on men.

Furthermore, as the employed members of Dixie are able to return home on a monthly basis (or for short weekly visits if the need arises), their families do not suffer from the disruptive consequences of the prolonged absence of key family members associated with migrant labour (even though employed villagers are often reluctant to make use of all the opportunities to return home). Other favourable conditions for the villagers of Dixie, compared to other rural settlements, include access to abundant grazing, fuel, building material obtainable from the veld, wild fruit and game, and a person-land ratio of approximately 1:4,5ha (the population figure fluctuates around 270, or 45 homesteads, on 1 245ha).

However, the villagers of Dixie enjoy their privileges at the cost of low wages, fierce competition for key jobs in the game reserves, ongoing conflict and a spiral of underdevelopment. The isolated character and social homogeneity of Dixie are brought about by the fact that few residents had worked outside the game reserves in the vicinity, that virtually all grew up in families who have had close and prolonged ties with the game reserves, and that almost all with employment experience have worked in the private game reserves at some stage or another. Dixie's villagers complain bitterly about the low wages paid by the owners of the game reserves (women's wages average approximately R150 per month, and men's approximately R300 per month), but they remain attached to the game reserves because they do not possess the necessary skills and social experience for jobs outside the game reserves (e.g., they know very little, if any, of either English or Afrikaans as they are obliged to address their employers in the game reserves in Fanakalo for the sake of the African image that, both in terms of the natural and the social environment, management wishes to create for the benefit of guests); because they do not have to be absent from home for long periods; because female residents cherish the availability of job opportunities; and because of fringe benefits (such as rations, loans and liberal leave) and access to tips from the wealthy guests of the game reserves.

Apart from the irrelevance of education beyond the most basic level for the kind of jobs provided by the game reserves, and Dixie parents' resultant indifference to the education of their offspring, one of the most devastating effects on the social life of Dixie is the hierarchical nature of the job structure in the game reserves. The number of posts involved (up to 18) at the various game lodges generates intense competition among the employees, a competition which is carried over to the social situation of Dixie in the form of conflict between individuals and families. In this way Dixie and their places of employment have come to form a single social universe to the villagers. Their close involvement with the game reserves is clearly reflected in the habit of saying "I'm going home tomorrow" (or on Friday, or whatever), meaning "I shall return to work", a way of speaking I found very confusing at first.

In general, therefore, Dixie is characterized by a low sense of communion among its members in as much as, and to the extent that, they lack the ability to collective action. They fail to escape from their predicament not merely because of the spiral of underdevelopment within which they are trapped by an employment situation, but also as a result of their particular historical experience. Up to the early sixties the villagers of Dixie (or their parents) were occupants of the Sabi Sand game reserves. At that time these farms were still used by their absentee owners only as game farms which they visited during the winter months for holidays and hunting. Being non-productive farms, the owners allowed a few individual families to stay on their properties, to work their fields and to keep cattle in return for labour provided by one or more male members of each family during the winter. As such these families fell outside the ambit of any comprehensive, organized political system. Had they not lacked the experience of collective political life in this marginalized way, Dixie probably would not have existed in its present social and economic form.[5]

The economic competition and social conflict produced by the circumstances of Dixie's inhabitants profoundly influence the position of children, their mutual relationships, their relationships with their families, and the social life of the settlement in general. On the one hand limited financial resources encourage both economic interdependence and economic competition between families, men and women, and adults and children (i.e., also between members of the same families), but on the other hand economic competition takes place on an unequal basis as justified by the ideology of male superiority and child inferiority.

MEN, WOMEN AND MARRIAGE

During supper (1988) Solly asks Piet why F.M. has beaten his wife that afternoon. I still want things to happen the way they should happen according to me, and not the way they actually happen. Therefore I confront Solly before Piet can answer: "But she is not his wife." Charles, wishing to avoid a boring discussion, says: "Let's leave those things, we want [to hear about] the matter of F.M." I'm not put off in the least (I have a research job to do - they only gossip), so I ask Solly again: "Why do you call her his wife if there was no wedding party, if F.S. never paid any *ndzovolo* (bridewealth) or even discussed the matter with her parents?" Piet answers me: "You know she stays and cooks at uncle's home."

In contrast to the indigenous law applied by the court of the Mnisi Tribal Authority under whose jurisdiction Dixie falls, a marriage is taken to exist[6] when a woman agrees to live with a man and takes up all the domestic duties of a wife at the man's home, with the intent of doing so on an enduring basis (irrespective of the fact that the bond may not last for long), and the man assumes the responsibility of providing the woman with cash, food, clothing, household utensils and basic furniture (irrespective of the extent to which he succeeds/fails to do so), even though *ndzovolo* (bridewealth) has not been delivered to the woman's parents. The man and woman refer to one another as "husband" and "wife", as do the villagers when they speak of the "husband of X", or the "wife of X". Children born from this union take the surname of their father, as do all the children of Dixie, with the result that the children of a woman often do not all bear the same surname, even though bridewealth was not delivered by their fathers. I take this to be a practical ruling in a place where marriages are brittle, where the children of a man by different women are in several cases members of different families, and inadvertent incestuous relationships consequently may become a real possibility. The casual nature of marriages, on the other hand, seems to be a function of the nature of the social universe of Dixie. The game lodges employ men and women in equal numbers, consequently men (who need women to perform the domestic duties of cooking and washing, and who would not live without a woman if they did not have to) live with a woman also at their places of employment. Since a woman requires financial assistance from the man she lives with, the man's wife at Dixie is neglected financially to a point where she starts "nagging" (*ku hlupa:* to trouble) her husband and gets "chased away" (*ku chachiwa*), or leaves her husband's home in desperation.

In the aggregate, male domination is facilitated by men's access to a wider range of jobs (including the more prestigious ones) and higher wages paid to male employees. Female resistance against male domination, though not nearly fully effective, is facilitated by women's access to jobs, their resultant ability to establish homesteads independently of men, to refuse marriage, and sexual infidelity. To the men of Dixie the mere thought of being without a woman who could look after their homesteads during their absence, and who could cook and wash for them when they come home, is unthinkable. To the women of Dixie a marriage relationship means being tied to a homestead, knowing that her husband's mistresses get hold of portions of his wages at his workplace before he returns home with the remains of it, and not being allowed by her husband to take up employment in a game reserve where she would be the first one to gain access to a man's (or men's) wages the moment he receives it at the end of the month.[7]

Male domination manifests in the respective culturally defined rights and duties of men and women. As opposed to women (or girls), men (or boys) do not take physical care of children and the homestead, they refrain from washing and cooking, they do not fetch water or gather fuel, they do not stay put at their homesteads night or day as is required of women, they don't have to inform their women (wives or mistresses) of their whereabouts, they are not required to practise sexual fidelity, and men may beat their women when the latter do not observe sexual fidelity or when men's infidelity is questioned by their women.

However, the simultaneous sanctioning of sexual infidelity by men and prohibition on sexual infidelity by women present an obvious paradox: If wives or mistresses are to abstain from sexual relationships with other men, with whom will men practise sexual infidelity? Whilst limited financial means is accompanied by unequal access to scarce resources at the cultural level, it requires physical survival and social reproduction through at least impaired access to these limited resources by all at the practical level - men simply cannot dominate women at the cost of their own social reproduction. The sexual infidelity of men therefore has to be understood in terms of economic competition between women in the face of men's control over limited financial resources. Because the women of Dixie earn lower wages than the men of Dixie, and because fewer women than men are employed, they are forced to compete for the wages of men through sexual liaisons. The bulk of the wages earned by the men of Dixie eventually ends up in the hands of their mistresses, thereby effecting a more equitable distribution of wages. Because a woman has to share her man's wages with other women, she forces other women to share their men's wages with her, so to speak.[8]

However, the spreading of income in this tiresome and often painful way for women, drastically affects the nature of family life and the position of children, as well as the composition of families. Men require of women to take care of the physical needs of their children with whatever amount of cash they are prepared to provide their children's mothers with. When the situation (of being neglected and being refused to take up employment) becomes too much for a woman, she is either "chased away", or she leaves with her smaller children to live with her parents or mother. The families of unmarried women are, in fact, often more stable than those of married men because mothers are a more stable factor in children's lives than fathers.[9] In the end, however, children are forced to devise strategies for survival independently of their parents, because of their fathers' neglect and/or their mothers' financial inabilities, in the form of direct and indirect competition with adults.

In order to proceed beyond a generalized overview, a few incidents from my fieldnotes may serve to shed light on the relationship between men and women as a context within which families and children operate and live.

▷ T.S., who is regarded as a particularly harsh man with women, often beats his wife when she complains about his neglect of her and their children, saying that she causes his head to spin and ache. The bulk of his wages goes to a mistress who lives with him at work. When he comes home on leave and finds his wife gone, he is genuinely shocked and at a complete loss: "Who will cook, wash and prepare tea for me?"

▷ F.S. (a chef at a game lodge), who got his Mozambican wife (his fourth wife after the first three had deserted him consecutively) against payment from a man specializing in this kind of services, brings his mistress who lives with him at work in the game reserve to meet his new wife. When his wife tells his mistress one morning to go and close a door, the latter tells the wife that she must not take herself to be the senior lady in the arrangement. F.S., thankful for the opportunity, promptly tells his mistress to shut up: He has asked her many times to marry him but since she persistently refused (not wanting to stay at home looking after F.S.'s homestead at Dixie, fetching water and fuel, cooking and washing for F.S. and his sons, while some mistress was enjoying first access to F.S.'s wages), she must not regard herself as his first (senior) wife.

- ▷ When J.S. married N.S. he forced her to give up her job in order to care for his homestead. When she subsequently suffered from neglect, she bitterly complained about the fact that her husband did not allow her to seek employment. She went to see him at work in the game reserve, despite his disapproval, to inform him that she could not stay at home without food and soap like an animal. Very annoyed, J.S. told N.S. that she was smelly and had to return home. He accompanied her back to Dixie, where he took her to her parents with the request that they teach their daughter how to behave properly, and how to wash her clothes and blankets. But J.S. had two wives, and his senior wife, A.S., who stayed with him at work made sure that she got the better part of his wages. Because A.S. was not keen to return home to Dixie to care for the homestead, she prevailed on J.S. to fetch her co-wife N.S. back home. However, subsequently unable to endure the severe neglect by her husband, N.S. complained so much to J.S. that he finally divorced her. A.S., the senior wife, therefore had to return to the homestead at Dixie, at which time she herself started to experience the neglect by J.S. Consequently A.S. deserted J.S. Though J.S. actively encouraged her on many occasions to leave, he never believed that she would actually do so. Therefore he is shocked when he finds her gone upon his return from work. While drinking with a friend, J.S. tells the latter about his sorrow, how he tried to fetch his wife back and how she and her family refused. In the same breath he tells his friend that he has an affair with A.M. (a divorced woman), but that she is breaking his heart by refusing to come and live with him at his homestead.

- ▷ R.N.'s wife, N.N., asked his permission to stay with him at work, but R.N. refused. His mistress who heard about N.N.'s request, said she would beat N.N. if the latter were to take her place with R.N. at work. N.N. now starts an affair with two men, whereupon R.N. informs her that she will no more receive any allowance from him - she must get it from her lovers.

THE DYNAMICS OF FAMILY LIFE AND RESIDENTIAL MEMBERSHIP

Once when I asked Charles, a boy of 16 at the time, after they had moved to their new house, why his cousins were no more living with them (they had been living together since my arrival at Dixie), he said: "But they are not of our *ndyangu* (family), they have their own *munti* (homestead)." A few days later we pass his mother's homestead and I notice Charles' cousins having a meal with his brothers, sister and grandmother. "Why don't they (the cousins) eat at their own homestead?" I ask Charles. He is sarcastic: "Didn't I tell you that we are *maxaka* (relatives)?"

To explain the difference between *ndyangu* (family), *maxaka* (relatives) and *munti* (homestead), it may be helpful to conjure a mental image. When one walks through the village towards the evening (when most villagers are home from school, the veld, visits, etc.), it is evident that people occupy demarcated sites according to betterment planning. Each occupied site with its cluster of huts, or house, is called a "*munti*" (homestead) or "*khaya*" (home). Homesteads are separated from adjacent ones by a fence or an open space. If one enters a homestead to enquire about the members of the homestead (hypothetically speaking, as one would not be so rude), one would learn that some of the boys and girls of all ages are those of the owner (male or female) of the homestead, and some are the children of a daughter or a sister of the owner. One may also encounter, therefore, more than one mature woman; or a man plus one or more young, unmarried men. The owner and his wife and their children, or the owner and her children, form a *ndyangu*. The rest (divorced or unmarried daughters who form separate *mindyangu* (families) with their children, and young men) are usually *maxaka* (relatives) of the owner. However, although the *ndyangu* is more than a mere linguistic category, there is considerable social and residential conflation between domestic families and kin in everyday life. It is important neither to understate nor overstate the difference between the domestic family and kin in general. In one sense limited financial means enforces economic interdependence between single families; in another sense limited financial means enforces a narrowing of financial liability. The responsibility for the care of the physical needs of dependent children is a source of pervasive conflict between the parent(s) of the children and the owner of the homestead of which the children are residential members.

A family therefore operates as a particular relationship between a man, a woman, and their children, or a woman and her children (the "children" being the dependent offspring of one or both of the parents) in which the father and mother (or the mother alone) are responsible for the persistent care of their dependent offspring in the form of particularly food, clothing and educational costs, whether this care is carried out systematically or not. Other children may also live with a family, but their parents are obliged to contribute substantially, if not fully, to the food they eat, the clothes they wear and towards their education - physical care received from someone other than a parent constitutes a privilege, not a right.[10] This ambivalence inherent in parents' responsibility to their dependent offspring and their dependence on others to assist in the care of their children, effects a special meaning of family life for children.

As family life in Dixie is acted out in the context of, or in conjunction with, residential membership (of homes) and since individual families do not control sufficient material means to be able to operate in economic or social autonomy from other families, it is necessary to consider the family also in the context of residential (homestead) membership.[11]

Residential membership of a *munti* (homestead) is operationally defined here to mean having meals and/or sleeping at a particular residential site, whether that sleeping and eating are by right of kinship or descent, or by virtue of practical necessity. So defined, residential membership statistically exceeds the population of Dixie: Many have meals and sleep at more than one residential site. They are those in the lesser positions of unequal, dyadic relationships because they lack assets to a larger degree than most other people. Thembi and Sammy are two such persons.

Thembi, a girl of 15 in 1985, was residing with her grandparents for the second time. Her mother, an attractive woman in her early thirties, had consistently resisted marriage, and also lacked the means to establish her own homestead (much to her mother's chagrin who wished herself relieved of the burden of grandchildren). Thembi, who never knew a father, therefore grew up without her mother in the home of her grandparents. Her grandfather was employed on a small game farm, and her grandmother constantly told her and other grandchildren what a burden they were to her. Her mother, who earned R50 a month as a waitress in 1985, could not provide her and her younger brother with much more than a bag of maize meal a month, which she received as part of a ration package from her employers.

When Thembi dropped out of school, it was required of her to support herself independently of her mother. Consequently she became detached from the family consisting of her mother, her brother and herself. As a teenage girl, Thembi therefore attached herself to a young man from a nearby settlement whom she often urged to buy her clothes. Harassed by her grandmother who subsequently began calling her a prostitute, Thembi moved to the homestead of a (female) friend's parents where she could share a hut with her young man, Fillip M. The owner of this homestead, his wife and adult son were all employed and at home for short periods only. As the rest of their children had to fend for themselves and were frightened at night, their parents were happy to have a man staying at their homestead. Soon however Thembi's friend found her own boyfriend and no longer wanted to share a hut with her little brothers and sisters. So Thembi and Fillip were forced to move to the latter's parents' home in the neighbouring settlement in order to make room for the other couple. Never having acquired or experienced the finer notions of conduct, and not knowing submissiveness, Thembi was soon sent packing by her lover's mother. She returned to Dixie, where she received accommodation at her mother's brother's homestead. When she subsequently started an affair with another man, Fillip ended their relationship and demanded back all the clothes he had given her. So in 1985 she was back where she had started before she left her grandmother's home. Fortunately another young man, Phineas C, whose wife had deserted him, shortly afterwards arrived home on leave from work in Johannesburg and took Thembi into his home (of which his mother was the owner). She was doubly fortunate for finding a man employed in Johannesburg where better wages were to be earned, and soon enough before he had the time to spend too much of his wages. When Phineas returned to Johannesburg, Thembi remained at his homestead by mutual agreement.

Some weeks later Phineas' mother informed Thembi that she had received a letter from him telling her to instruct Thembi to leave his home because he had been reconciled with his wife, and intended to fetch her home. Thembi, hanging on to her newly found security, refused to leave and insisted to hear from Phineas personally. Soon she received a letter from him in which he threatened to beat her thoroughly should he find her at his home upon his arrival with his wife. She left Phineas' home and now started oscillating between four homesteads.

When Thembi became detached from her family of birth formed by her mother, and failed to substitute it with a family of procreation, she also failed to obtain residential stability.

Sammy, a relative of Thembi, experienced similar residential instability. His mother was an elder sister of Thembi's mother, and also employed. But unlike his cousin's mother, Sammy's mother was divorced and the owner of a homestead. Her homestead was mostly vacant as she and her eldest son were both employed, and her eldest daughter married elsewhere. Sammy and his elder sister of ten years were (like Thembi, originally) in the care of their grandparents. With his meager wages (R50 per month) Sammy's grandfather was not able to extend his overcrowded home.

Unwilling to share the same hut with his grandmother and six other children, of whom five were girls on top of it, embarrassed by and weary of the constant scolding of an oft drunken grandmother, shying away from having to wash with cold water on cold winter mornings (as fuel was irregularly collected), and not receiving meals regularly (often meals were not prepared when his grandmother was on the spree, spending the cash Sammy's mother gave her for his and his sister's subsistence), Sammy avoided sleeping and taking meals at his grandparents' homestead as often as he could. Though his grandmother was relieved not to have to feed one grandchild, she was very annoyed with Sammy who never came to greet her (as was expected of all younger towards elder relatives). Whenever she came across him in the village, she asked Sammy in exasperation why he did not come to greet her even once a week. But she never received a reply; Sammy always looked away from her, humiliated and annoyed for being scolded in public by a grandmother. Sammy sometimes put up at his maternal uncle's homestead, sometimes at the homestead of his other grandmother, but mostly he resided with a friend (also a relative of his) with the most stable family in Dixie.[12]

De jure Sammy was, up to this stage, firstly a member of his mother's homestead, and secondly of his grandparents' homestead. But he was hardly a *de facto* member of these homesteads. His joy at staying at his mother's homestead whenever he had the chance to do so, was so great, it clearly showed in his changed demeanour. His mother came home on leave every fourth month, but when she was home she either regularly attended drinking bouts at other homesteads (more often in neighbouring settlements), or hosted one at her home. Her lover who more often than not stayed over at her home, further complicated matters for a disappointed Sammy.

During my absence from Dixie (1986 and 1987) Sammy herded the goats of his mother's brother in return for which he received meals and accommodation. When I returned to Dixie in 1988 he stopped herding goats. In 1989 his brother took (*ku teka*) a wife and Sammy was invited to stay with them.

The residential independence of Sammy's mother was designed to protect her against the worst of male domination, to which end it was particularly effective. But it did not provide her children with much security. Both the fact that Sammy's mother is responsible for his subsistence in the final instance (the fact that she formed a separate family with her two children), and the fact that he depended on others due to his mother's absence, account for Sammy's multiple residential membership.

It is the ideal of both married men and unmarried women to be the owner of a homestead. Having one's own homestead has the distinct advantage of decreasing one's own dependence and/or providing the opportunity to exploit the dependence of others. (However Sammy's mother's absence, and not her residential independence, resulted in her children's residential dependence on others.) The examples of Maggie and Siweni may serve to explain this principle.

Maggie decided to retire at the age of 66 when in 1985 her job as a gardener in one of the game reserves became too strenuous for her. She had her own homestead which she shared with her 21 year old son and his wife, her 16 year old son, and her two divorced daughters and their four small children. Her married son and two daughters were employed. She retired also, Maggie said, because her son had married and she therefore got a daughter-in-law who could work for her. Her retirement and her son's marriage, however, complicated matters as her homestead consisted of only two small huts which now were both permanently occupied by her daughter-in-law and herself respectively. Towards the end of 1985 one of her daughters fell ill and returned home on sick-leave. A month later, while the daughter was still recuperating, Maggie rather brusquely told her to leave her homestead, as "I do not want people on my site who do not give me money". When she retired Maggie had counted on the assistance of her son and married daughters; she was not equipped or prepared for the reverse situation. She could accept her daughter and grandchildren as members of her homestead, but she refused to accept them as members of her family. Her daughter, still weak and with no other place to go with her two small children, was terrified but hung on stubbornly despite her mother's mounting wrath. When she eventually returned to work, her mother relented and the children were welcome to stay. She in fact now cooked and washed for them, as, with the daughter again earning money, the relationship was once more one of mutual dependence.

Siweni, a 70 year old pensioner, occupied a residential site together with his wife, two divorced, employed daughters and three grandchildren. The adjacent site was occupied by another divorced and employed daughter of Siweni, her own divorced daughter, and the two women's five children. The two sites, however, formed one large homestead with no visible signs of internal division and with a single, central kitchen. Siweni could not acquire more than one residential site in his own name but overcame the obstacle by arranging the buildings in such a way as to form one large homestead, and to have the arrangement function as a single household. In this he had the consent of his daughters and granddaughters who were dependent on him and their mother to take care of their children while they were at work. Taking care of the grandchildren was part of the need to have access to their daughters' rations. Apart from the regular members, the combined homestead also provided sleeping accommodation to ten grandchildren from two other homesteads who were afraid to sleep on their own during their fathers' absence (a total of 24 inmates occupied eight huts). When the homestead became too overcrowded in 1988, Siweni, rather than send one of his daughters and her children away, assisted her to obtain the other adjacent site, which was then developed under his supervision as part of the existing homestead. When he obtained a better job, he told another daughter, who had in the meantime joined him with her six children (in other words the daughter with the biggest family) to look for her own stand, demonstrating the fact that assisting members of another family (albeit your own daughter's) is not an obligation.

Samuel's case presents a similar example of the dynamics of residential membership and family life, and the interplay between the two.

As the owner of 37 head of cattle, and employed as a ranger in the Manyelethi Game Reserve, Samuel (58) was regarded as the wealthiest man in Dixie in 1985. He had three women in three different settlements, all of whom he supported together with their children to some extent. He was married to the one at Dixie, divorced from the second, and to be married to the third. At his homestead at Dixie resided his wife and unmarried children, and two divorced, employed daughters and their children, totaling 21 individuals. Unable to support anyone but themselves personally, the two daughters left all the expenses of the household to their father. When Samuel started building a new home for the woman he intended to marry, and particularly feeling the pinch of supporting three households, he accused his wife at Dixie of allowing "your daughters to desert their husbands and to run back to my homestead with their many children". He also told his daughters to acquire their own sites and to build their own homes where they could stay with their children, "so you yourselves may feel the pain of buying food for children". He harassed them mercilessly until they succumbed.

What all these cases show is that

(a) family life is inseparable from residential membership - the residential conflation of families;

(b) residential stability/instability or security/insecurity is closely associated with family membership, and not residential membership as such - the reality of the conceptual existence of single (nuclear) families as separate social categories obliged to accept responsibility for their own maintenance produces residential instability;

(c) the analytical distinction between nuclear and extended families as normative categories displaying an enduring character (on the basis of their normative status) is spurious in the case of Dixie, and

(d) residential membership, in turn, is complexly and dynamically shaped by various phenomena relating to employment or unemployment, economic dependence or independence, male domination, the position of women, and the position of children (belonging to specific families), as these in turn are influenced by Dixie's relationship with game reserves and their historical experience as politically marginalized people.

CHILDREN[13]

While sitting at my homestead chatting with Charles (now 18), a youngster passes. Says Charles: "You see that one? Just recently we were both still boys (*vafana*); now only I am still a boy whilst that one is an adult (*munhu loyi nkulu*) although we are of the same age. I'm still schooling but he is married, has a child and his own homestead ... If he attends court he will be allowed to speak. But if I attend court [which he does not] they will tell me to shut up because I'm still a child. They will tell me: 'You don't have a wife or a homestead, you have nothing and you know nothing about the matters of a homestead.' And Nettie, you see, she is younger than Sibongile, but she is an adult today whilst Sibongile is still a child in school." (Nettie, already divorced, is the mother of a child.)

The duration of childhood is also indirectly economically influenced. As I have already related earlier how Thembi became detached from her family of birth (and childhood) after she dropped out of school as a result of her mother's financial predicament, I shall outline the position of boys here. Boys in the final stages of puberty who do not attend school as a result of their parents' financial inabilities, are urged by their parents to take up employment, in order both to ease the financial pressure on, and to contribute to, their families' budgets. However, anxious to become "men" and to compensate for the inferior status of being less educated than their peers, employed boys marry and set up a homestead as soon as possible after they have taken up employment.

Whilst parents are obliged to support their dependent children, children are obliged to perform tasks allocated to them by adults, such as domestic duties (girls), herding, building, etc. (boys) for the homestead. Though not phrased as a duty, it is accepted as normal practice for the children of single women to perform these tasks at other homesteads or families in return for cash, food or accommodation (*cf.* Spiegel, 1987); for all children to forage for food in the veld (game, wild fruit, locusts and termites); or to survive through social bonds with other children by which one may gain access to food, clothes and accommodation, in order to compensate for a parent's failure in providing for his/her children. As the needs of men receive priority over the needs of women, so do the needs of adults over those of children, who are socially invisible to adults to a large extent.

Though children react subconsciously (as I will point out later) to their social invisibility and the low priority their needs receive, they take it for granted, as a fact of life. They admire a man or a father for the expensive *hayila* ("hi-fi"), trousers or shoes he bought, without resentment, even though the man's children may often be without food and have to borrow clothes from other children. When they talk about their position at the bottom of the ladder, they make fun of themselves as if they are a natural human category and not a social category culturally created by adults. Towards the end of October 1990, enjoying an ample supper of stew with the boys, Charles suddenly tells me: "There is no other way, you will fetch me for Christmas. We understand each other, don't we?" Smiling, Rhulani adds: "They [parents] are going to leave us at home with loaves of bread on Christmas." They all started laughing, each relating his own experience. If parents (or a parent) lack funds to buy food for Christmas (meat and rice, particularly), they will buy a few loaves of bread, leave it at home for the children, and take off to the homesteads of family or friends where they may share in a Christmas meal and drinks. On the same occasion the boys also jocularly recounted an incident I have heard many times before: of how one killed a warthog, took the meat home, of how family came to fetch portions of the meat until so little was left that only the parents had meat to eat, and the children (including the hunter himself) had to eat *guxe* (greens collected from the veld).

Depending on the amount of relished food such as meat or eggs available, only men receive of it, then women, and lastly children. I came to understand food shortage as part of the everyday life of children, and the role of families' inability to provide in the needs of their children, in the way in which children sometimes answer my questions. When I once asked the boys staying in my homestead why a particular boy was now herding his uncle's cattle, and not the son of the uncle, they answered me matter-of-factly: "If he doesn't herd, they won't give him food." (Therefore, not being a member of his uncle's family, he had to work for food.) Recently, as the boys and I were driving early in the morning past Bongani, a boy slightly younger than themselves, I was confused both by the fact that the boys did not shout some jocular remarks at him, and the fact that Bongani did not respond when I waved to him. When I remarked that I wonder what the matter could be with Bongani this morning, Charles, who with Solly sat in front in the cabin of the pick-up with me, retorted without hesitation: "Its hunger." When we stopped at another point in the village, I inquired from the boys who sat in the load-box of the pick-up about Bongani's surliness. One answered: "Maybe he is hungry." From the silent agreement by the rest, the way in which I received similar answers from two boys independently, and the fact that the boys refrained from shouting at Bongani as we passed him, I gathered that the boys must have read the signs of hunger in Bongani's posture before we reached him — from knowledge gained from personal experience.

The experiences of women directly affect their children's position, as women are obliged to make ends meet together with their children with whatever they receive from their men; or because children are, as prescribed by male ideology, the responsibility of women up to the stage when they start earning an income, or get married. I do not know children of well-cared for or comfortably employed women who are badly neglected, but I do know of relatively wealthy (for Dixie) men with badly neglected children. A young woman, **Zodwa**, and her two children, is one example of the close interrelatedness which exists between a mother's experiences and those of her children.

Unemployed and deserted by the father of her two small sons by the first half of 1985, Zodwa (23) and her two sons stayed in the home of her employed mother, adjoining the homestead of her pensioned grandparents. Her eldest son, Mishack, was five years, and her second son, Victor, two months old. The material support Zodwa received from her grandparents (for whom she had to cook and wash), and from her divorced mother (who also had three children of her own to support), as well as the beer she brewed (or bought) and sold, were not sufficient to provide in her and her children's most basic needs. Though both her sons were still too young to be left in the care of others (the actual reason for her unemployment until then), she was forced to seek employment during June, which she found at a game reserve at a wage of R50 per month. In addition to wages, a job at the game lodge improved her chances of finding a lover who could share some of his wages with her. She took her two sons with her to the game lodge. At the end of December 1985 Zodwa lost her job, because, she said, all pregnant women were dismissed from work, and those with small children told to take their children elsewhere or to give up their jobs. Zodwa came home to Dixie to ask her mother, who was on leave, to take care of her children so as to enable her to keep her job. Bewildered by her daughter's request, her mother told Zodwa that she had her own kids to support. Zodwa was visibly confused and depressed as the survival of her sons (who now clearly were in a better state of health than before the onset of their mother's employment) was at stake. Apart from the job she stood to lose, but which she could find back again, she also expressed concern about losing her lover permanently. During the months of January and February of 1986 Zodwa exploited various resources while unemployed: She looked after her mother's brother's (deserted by his wife) homestead and cooked and washed for his children for R40 per month; stayed with, and cooked and washed for another divorced man while he was on leave (thereby gaining access to his wages); brewed beer for her lover who came to visit her for one day from one of the game reserves (a potential resource she also had to keep alive), and brewed and sold beer.

Apart from the inadequacy of her efforts, these efforts themselves drained her emotional energy. The dismal state of their livelihood started showing again in the outer appearance of Mishack (now approaching the age of five), the elder of Zodwa's two sons. Yet, although some sense of insecurity was still apparent in Mishack he clearly started gaining confidence through a growing ability to take care of himself independently of his mother. So Zodwa was forced by circumstances to hire a woman to look after her smaller son, Victor (it was agreed that Mishack would eat and sleep at his mother's grandparents), when at the beginning of March 1986 she went to work at the same lodge as before.

One week later, Alice, the woman taking care of Victor went to visit her relatives and left Victor with her step-children without informing any of Zodwa's relatives. Victor, still an infant, cried all night and was fetched by his mother's sister the next day and delivered at her grandmother who suffered from swollen legs and could hardly walk. Zodwa's mother who was on leave at home, wrote her daughter a letter asking her to give up her job and to return home to her children as there was nobody fit to look after them. Zodwa ignored her mother's call. At the end of March Alice again went visiting and this time left Victor in the care of his grandmother's sister. A week later Alice left Victor with Mishack, who nervously struggled to feed his little brother soft porridge. Two days later Victor was found on his own and without clothes at the homestead of Alice by a neighbour who took him to Zodwa's sister. A week later (7 April) Victor was taken to hospital, severely undernourished. In 1988 Mishack, at the age of eight, started herding the cattle of another family, and moved to live with them.

Mishack's position in these events also demonstrates the critical importance of the stage, roughly between the ages of four and five, when children cross a threshold between being a toddler and beyond. Though undoubtedly affected by his mother's predicament, Mishack was not nearly as badly affected by it as was his smaller brother, Victor. Severe cases of malnutrition invariably are infants or toddlers whose mothers are deserted or neglected by men. Children complete the toddler stage successfully when they start to master the craft of building networks with which they replace complete dependence on their mothers or other relatives. Their "coming of age" in the survival sense (as against the ideological sense) becomes visible through many signs, but it is most clearly apparent in the facial expressions of those kids for whom coming of age means a great difference - distinct expressions of confidence and defiance which come to replace previous expressions of insecurity. Their new independence, or more accurately, their reduced vulnerability to their mothers' experiences, involves the ability to "forage" for themselves, be it in the veld (in the form of hares, rats, birds, locusts, ants or berries), or at the homes of friends where they know from information obtained through their networks that food is obtainable at specific times or occasions. Their independence is brought about by the ability to manipulate social relationships for the sake of both short and long-term benefits.

The close interrelatedness between the position of children and that of their mothers is also illustrated by the predicament of children who grow up in a family where a stepmother has replaced their own mother. Two cases involving men whose wages are amongst the highest earned by the inmates of Dixie (both were the owners of vehicles) may serve as an example. The mother of one set of children was deceased, and the mother of the other children divorced. Despite the fact that their fathers were two of the most well-off men of the village, these children were in the ranks of the worst neglected - unkempt and almost always in rags. Whilst the villagers of Dixie sympathized with these children, they also appreciated the reluctance of a woman struggling to make ends meet to care for the children of another woman. And the father of the children does not intervene if his wife has not spent the money she received from him for the household fairly equitably.

Competition amongst the adults of Dixie, contributing to the insecurity of their children, forces children into systematic social co-operation and long-term social strategies. Though they mirror the sexual division operative amongst adults to a large degree, the social life of children is distinctly more cohesive than the social life of adults.[14] Children deliberately share everything they get hold of. The meaning of something one receives is contained in the way in which it can be put to use in securing and enhancing one's social value. The social value attached to valuables (be it food, a pair of shoes, money or sweets) is noticeably higher in the case of the most destitute children, who naturally have the greatest need for social co-operation. Though the least destitute children attach comparatively more private value to assets, in their case private value is still also appreciably ancillary to social value. Even though a child may very seldom get sweets or cold drink, s/he would share it with as many friends as possible, even if it means getting only a fraction of a sweet or a small sip of cold drink oneself. Chewing gum is a great favourite, as the same "*chepisi*" (the word for chewing gum, from "Chappie") could be shared by any number of children. Shoes, trousers, dresses and jerseys all interchange between friends. If I sometimes ask one of the boys where the trousers (or whatever) which he often wore, are, he will tell me they are someone else's. I have long stopped arguing with them when I see several other boys wear a piece of clothing they received on my overdraft. I could not understand why, when they really needed a pair of shoes or a shirt, they ask for them only to lend them to several other boys. Later I learned to console myself that my overdraft contributes towards the widening of their opportunities; that, if I buy a pair of shoes, I actually buy it for several boys. By lending clothes to others one is placed in the position to borrow from them again, thereby gaining access to both a wider variety and a more lasting source of clothes. What matters is ownership and control over the shoes, not the exclusive use of them. This is how the need to bind others to oneself works - by maneuvering them into dependence on, and obligations to, oneself. By so doing children ensure survival somewhat independent of parents' aid, in the face of parents' financial shortcomings. However, whilst destitution requires that as many as possible be rendered dependent (by spreading the favours), its maintenance demands tremendous vigilance.

Initially children often pressed me for odd jobs (presently they simply press me for support), though they never called it "jobs". They would say they want to "help" me, only to demand excessive payment on completion of the "assistance". When two or three were then given something (like weeding) to do, they would always call up to five or more other friends who would also eventually be in a position to claim payment for the "help" I received. Solly, eight years old at the time, and with a mother who was divorced and absent at work at a game lodge for almost half that year, gradually maneuvered himself into a standing arrangement whereby everybody else who needed some assistance which I was in a position to provide, were made to believe that the best way to gain access to my willingness was through himself. Solly regularly appeared during the afternoon to build a fire for which nobody initially had any use, but which my wife or I started to use so as not to offend him, and consequently got so used to it that we did not notice at what point Solly became indispensable. In addition, he softened me up by claiming my protection over him whenever he was in trouble with someone. On at least two occasions I know of, he simply conjured threats against him in order to get something from me. Thus, eventually, Solly found himself earning a regular wage. The moment Solly's position was sufficiently established, he appointed a friend to gather fuel in the veld for his fires, three others to carry the fuel to the village, one to build the fire, and sometimes (when pressed hard enough) a different one to start the fire. But he jealously reserved the managerial duties for himself. All these commissions substantially eroded his earnings, apart from the hand-outs he made to still other cronies in the form of bread, cold drink, chewing gum and such like which he bought with the remainder of his earnings at the end of every month.

However, the significance of his schemes derives from the fact that though he gained very little materially in a direct way, his social position and security improved tremendously. He gained a key position in a popular network, which also gained in status through Solly's control of resources. Solly intuitively made his choice between short-term benefit and long-term security. Through his experience he became wise and socially mature some time before the age of eight years.

Though girls equally depend on social bonds, they get fewer opportunities than boys to extend or strengthen bonds. Girls always have to be home (when not at school) to perform domestic chores. However, when their predicament is acute, they skip their chores to spend time with friends in the village or (in the case if teenage girls) with friends at another settlement. On the other hand, girls compensate for their disadvantage through sexual liaisons with boys who are obliged to support them in various small ways. Like men, boys have to share that which they obtain through their greater freedom, albeit on an unequal basis.

Co-operation amongst children, however, takes place at a pragmatic and strategic rather than a moral level. They develop mechanisms for co-operation distinctly out of necessity and never phrase it in moral terms. For this reason, when they grow up and start working on the game farms, they comfortably slip into the process of interindividual competition.

Social co-operation and interdependence among the children of Dixie therefore exclude neither selective co-operation nor disloyalty and friction. Ridiculing one's closest friends, making public the most personal and delicate secrets of a friend or even beloved sister/brother in a loud, hysterical voice and with agonizing detail, telling lies about them with great skill if there is advantage to be gained from it, joyfully joining the principal in the hunt for close friends who dodged school, and then repeatedly miming with unabashed joy the corporal punishment they received when they were caught and the way they jumped and screamed, laughing with maniac glee at a friend who injured himself by accident, are all fully normal and regular habits of children. It is a way of getting sensitive senses blunted and prepared for a tough life in South Africa's Dixie. For the same reason, however, they do not easily sever their ties permanently, and they share as much as they can with as many friends as circumstances permit. Sharing, betrayal and mistrust are profoundly important necessities in the life of the children of Dixie, and two sides of the same coin: functional mistrust and functional interdependence. It reflects their continual disappointment in those on whom they have to depend, and the need to cope with that experience; the need to cope with the experience of an unreliable humanity; the need not to rely on those one has to depend on; to know the need for one's own dependence in the face of one's dependence on people who are all, individually, unreliable by virtue of their own circumstances; having only experienced the neglect or rejection or inability of a father to take care of his children, or having experienced the almost permanent absence and/or inadequate efforts of a mother trying to support her children on her own. Personal independence is therefore embodied only in the personal responsibility for, and ability to, social engineering and the forging of bonds.

Although children sincerely appreciate their mothers' efforts to support them, they nonetheless have to battle against the constraints inherent in their mothers' positions. And although they greatly admire individual adults for particular abilities or possessions, they may at any moment show contempt for any adult other than a parent. They may at one moment admire a man for something he is doing well (like dancing), and the next moment laugh in his face (from a safe distance) with undisguised derision for having done something unbecoming. They mimic, gossip and laugh about the less fortunate deeds of adults who seldom bother to hide matters from children. Children are indispensable to the love affairs of adults, who use them as *tindhuna* ("headmen", in the sense of go-betweens) to send secret messages to lovers. However, no love affair is ever treated as a total secret by children amongst themselves. Children's occasional scant respect for adults largely derives from their experience of adults who are either reluctant (their fathers) or ill-equipped (their mothers) to care for them, and who, by exposing themselves socially to children with little reservation, show little respect for the opinion of children. Because they are socially invisible to adults, children control more information in Dixie than adults do. When adults are not sure about some rumour, or want to know something about someone, they will call and ask a child. And the child will refuse knowledge unless s/he stands to gain more from this service than from the one through which they gained the knowledge.

I sometimes get glimpses of raw protest by children against the invisibility which they only understand intuitively. On occasion a small group of children were sitting under a tree just outside the village when a screaming child, hotly pursued by her mother who had a stick in her hand, passed within about 50m of them. As if ignited by a single switch, they all started yelling at the girl: "Run, run - it will tire just now!" They used the diminutive prefix *xi* ("it"), applied to belittle or to show disrespect, in referring to the woman. When the woman tripped and fell, they repeatedly shouted and laughed in forced, guttural and humourless voices: "It fell! It fell!" Children never seem to flee to another adult or homestead when threatened by corporal punishment, but flee to the veld instead, screaming hysterically.

Their intuitive resistance against social invisibility made itself known to me in a way which explained the children of Dixie to me better than anything else. I might scold them, be impatient with them, even let them down, yet they would accept it with astonishing (to me) resignation and goodwill. But however diplomatically I might try to explain to them under whatever circumstances that I wanted a little privacy at a given moment, it instantly changed them into complete, profoundly aggressive strangers - a subtle change which becomes perceptible in blank expressions, quiet voices, straightened little backs and measured gaits when slowly leaving my homestead.

Children's comparatively limited involvement with or commitment to their families and adult relatives is also reflected in their lack of commitment to their families' ancestors, whom they are also prone to ridicule at times. I have seen them making fun of a grandmother who was praying on her knees at the family altar: "Did you remember to give them their snuff?" (They were referring to the ancestors.) They have to be forced to attend family gatherings for addressing the ancestors because they abhor the ordeal of having to sit up for two or three nights whilst being subjected to the, for them, very scary business of meddling with potentially vengeful ancestors. "*Swa chavisa!*" they would call these rituals ("They are frightening!"). On all the occasions of which I have knowledge, at least one kid slipped away from the ritual during the night to go and sleep elsewhere. Those involved will complain tirelessly to their friends for days in advance of the occasion, saying it is the adults' business, not theirs.

In summing up, I want to give an illustration of the pragmatic nature of the children's shifting allegiance to, respectively, their families and social bonds outside their families. When initially the boys (presently there are six of them) gradually and with undisputed (by all of us) astuteness maneuvered themselves into becoming members of my homestead when I was at Dixie, I was perplexed by the ease with which they had left their respective families without informing their parents that they would be eating and sleeping at my homestead. Or when Solly or Charles' mother returned home on leave after two or three months, I expected them to want to return to their homes. When kids came to inform one of the boys that his father or mother had arrived, he would react in a very casual way; and if I asked him whether he was not going to greet his father or mother, he would answer me in such a way as to let me know that I should not make an issue of it: "*N'ta va ndzi va pfuxela*" ("I shall be greeting them"), itself a vague kind of answer which roughly implies: "I shall greet them sometime when the opportunity arises." Their parents encouraged their membership of my homestead with equal willingness, amongst others for the fact that it eased the pressure on their own budgets (and the parents of boys who were not members of my homestead blamed me for not easing the pressure on their budgets).

Conclusion

Naturally when I speak of Dixie children's "limited involvement" with their families, I speak so from my own experience as a child and as a parent. But then, one never speaks from a neutral position; and one can neither understand nor explain from a neutral position. I therefore conclude with a very generalized, caricatured comparison of family life and the position of children in Dixie ("them") with family life and the position of children in affluent society ("us").

Families in affluent society are largely economically self-sufficient entities in competition with one another. Parents provide in all the basic (and non-basic) material needs of their children to a greater or lesser degree; consequently children are heavily dependent on their parents. The dependence of children coincides with parents' control over the lives of their children, living the lives of their children for their children, as it were. Children are manipulated into competition by way of a variety of rewards, some more subtle but not less effective than others (a slightly less broad smile for 60% than for 75% in school results). As children therefore depend on parents' assistance, and are encouraged to develop their abilities independent of others, they are far ahead of the children of Dixie as far as conceptual abilities are concerned, but lag far behind the latter in terms of social abilities and the capacity to operate independently of parents. The individual families of Dixie, on the other hand, do not control sufficient material resources to be able to function independently of other families. Though they compete for the best paid jobs, they still have to co-operate with one another for the sake of physical and social reproduction. Since parents fail to provide in all the material needs of their children, the latter are forced into social co-operation and in the process develop astute social abilities, the capacity to take care of themselves, and the capacity to participate with adults in the process of social reproduction. Affluent families deem it too risky to allow children participation in social reproduction; the families of Dixie simply cannot effect social reproduction without the participation of children.

Paradoxically, affluence, competition and individualism coincide with trust and faith as moral issues. Poverty, economic co-operation and sociableness in Dixie, on the other hand, are associated with mistrust because the persons whose co-operation one needs, are all individually dependent on social co-operation themselves. Cultural knowledge and social practice in Dixie, like elsewhere, are designed to cope with the conditions of one's existence. Neither the kind of family process I am used to, nor my children, would survive under the circumstances of Dixie. Neither would the families and children of Dixie survive in our circumstances, hence the fact that those children in Dixie with considerable experience of our family life, remained faithful to their "ways" throughout.

Social practice in Dixie, however terrifying to an outsider, is fully rational to the extent that it makes the continuation of life possible. When viewed in isolation, some of the components of social practice in Dixie may seem to be suicidal, but as a whole it has developed systematically in response to a particular kind of experience. Yet, though functional and rational, social practice in Dixie is carried out at crippling emotional costs.

Notes

1 The research on which this article is based was sponsored by the Human Sciences Research Council. Originally written for a seminar organized by the Co-operative Programme on Marriage and Family Life, and subsequently presented at a seminar at the Department of Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, the article has benefited from comments received on both occasions. However, I alone am responsible for both the type of information selected and the way in which it has been subjected to treatment.

2 By "Dixie" I do not assume the existence of a bounded community unaffected by influences beyond its physical boundaries. However, I take the position that permanent residence in Dixie presents constraints and opportunities peculiar to Dixie, that the dynamics of social life in Dixie is shaped by both unique and general factors in unique ways: I do not automatically understand social life in other villages if I understand social life in Dixie.

3 From research I have done elsewhere in townships and rural areas in the Eastern Cape, Bophuthatswana and the Witwatersrand I learned that the cultural meaning of "child" and "family" in the social context of Dixie is both unique in the comprehensive sense, and

common to similar social situations lacking in material means in several fundamental respects.

4 As the cultural meaning and ideological nature of concepts such as "child", "adult", "woman", "girl", "man", "boy", etc. will become evident during the course of this paper, I use them uncritically in the rest of the paper.

5 I am indebted to Edwin Ritchken (oral communication) for this perspective.

6 My feeling is that "consummate" would be too strong a word here. Wedding parties take place only very rarely (in cases where a man can afford it); it is much more common for a woman to move in with a man without any fuss. The initial living together of a man and a woman has a vaguely tentative character to it both in the eyes of the couple and in the eyes of the other villagers. I say this, on the one hand, on the basis of the ways in which the couple test one another during the first few months: the reluctance of the woman to perform domestic duties too conscientiously (with the general attitude of "Don't get the impression that I'm that much anxious to live with you"), and the casual attitude of a man conveying the impression (often verbally) to his woman: "Don't delude yourself into believing that you can't be chased". The rest of the villagers, on the other hand, no doubt reacting out of social knowledge, for the first few months of the marriage refer to the wife by her name and her own surname (even though they refer to her as the "wife of X"). They start referring to her by her husband's surname when they sense that the couple is becoming committed to the union.

7 During the period 1985/6 Dixie had only one unmarried, divorced man (he was temporarily unmarried/without a constant female companion, because his mistress from elsewhere refused to come and live with him), but no widower, and 22 divorced, unmarried women and six widows. Up to this period 41 men had married 70 times (half of them more than once, and some up to five times), and 69 women had married 71 times.

8 The spreading of income through sexual liaisons makes it virtually impossible to determine individual or household income reliably, or to take income in itself at face value. The families of wealthier men are often more neglected than those of poorer men because wealthier men usually entertain more mistresses than poorer men (and because women give preference to wealthier men); and the homesteads and children of some unmarried, unemployed women are better cared for than the families of some wealthier married men or women.

9 It is in this context that male domination produces conflict amongst women (between a woman and her daughter-in-law competing for the wages of their son/husband), or close bonds between men and women or between women (between a woman and her sons and daughters). It is a common saying amongst the residents of Dixie that one sides with one's mother in the event of a dispute between one's father and mother, because

mothers raise their children against the considerable odds caused by the indifference of fathers.

10 Sharp (1987:143) observed a similar situation in Qwaqwa: "People do not have the means to make outright gifts to others, whether the latter be neighbours or, indeed, kin." *Cf.* also Spiegel, 1987.

11 The term "household" has largely replaced the term "family" in anthropological literature because rural families seldom live without non-family members. However, the term "household" is equally unhelpful to the extent that individual members of homesteads are often members of more than one household, or to the extent that individuals oscillate between homesteads. I therefore prefer to approach this matter from the vantage point of residential membership: It is less confusing and more accurate to trace the residential membership of individuals than creating "households" with economic, social or residential boundaries which do not exist in practice.

12 Subsequently Sammy became a member of my homestead and soon started, gradually and patiently, manoeuvring his friends (in similar situations as himself) into my homestead.

13 I share Reynolds' (1989:1-2) opinion that "Much of anthropological writing on childhood generalises about all children and leaves one curious as to the nature and range of their experience ... Therefore, one's information about the way in which children experience the world must derive in large measure from the children's own behaviour and expression".

14 In contrast to two other settlements where adults engage in social co-operation as a long-term strategy and where children immerse themselves with less reserve in their respective families (which are also more sensitized to the needs of children), the children of Dixie appear to be less involved with their respective families and more involved with other children. On their own the children of Dixie, socially speaking, present a visible social category both apart from and **vis-á-vis** adults - whereas adults form a social category apart from children in terms of social (adult) status and not by way of corporateness. The degree of competition and conflict prevalent amongst the adults, results in corporateness to a concomitant degree amongst children - the adults of a settlement close to Dixie (personal communication, A. Fischer) are engaged in on-going corporate action to overcome unemployment and insufficient natural resources, action which does not keep children at arm's length. In a distant settlement in Ritavi (personal communication, C.S. van der Waal) where both higher wages and a higher rate of unemployment are experienced; where employed parents are not engaged in a constant battle for sought-after positions in the same work-place; where life is not contained within a monolithic-type social universe largely created by a particular employment structure - there life contrasts in a similar way to life in Dixie. For the children of that settlement the context constituted by the social world of a family is also socially more meaningful, and the context constituted by the social world of children also socially less meaningful, than for the children of Dixie.

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V

Paring down the family: The child's point of view

Pamela Reynolds

"... *it is sometimes the most fragile thing that has the power to endure*" *(May Sarton, 1959).*

I write, in part, against the notion of a child as object: the object of socialization, education, health care, and so on. Indeed, Malinowski's famous definition of the family is centered on the child as object (Malinowski, 1913). He said that the family is universal because it fulfils a universal human need for the nurturance and care of children. He defined the family as consisting of (i) a bounded social unit which was distinguishable from other similar units; (ii) a physical location (home) where the functions associated with child rearing were performed; and (iii) a specific set of emotional bonds (love) between family members (Moore, 1988:23). In this definition the family, the home and the domestic arena are conflated and separated from the public sphere of work, business and politics. Moore (1988:23) says that the definition is compelling because it accords well with Western ideas about the form and function of the family. Malinowski's definition of the family has been challenged by later anthropologists and it is now widely accepted that the basic unit of society is not the nuclear family consisting of father, mother and child(ren), but rather the mother-child unit. Yet the basic concept of the family is still frequently applied to this unit; that is, it is characterized in terms of the same three points that Malinowski used to define the family more generally.

Feminist critiques in anthropology address the tendency to see mothers and mothering as "natural" — the underlying assumption in the Malinowskian view of the family. It is the idea that mothers and mother-child units have a universal function dictated by biological facts of reproduction and the necessity of child maintenance that is questioned. Moore (1988:25) observes that

> The concept of "mother" is not merely given in natural processes (pregnancy, birth, lactation, nurturance), but is a cultural construction which different societies build up and elaborate in different ways.

There is cultural diversity both in the way in which women perform their role as mother, and in the link made between the category "women" to such attributes of motherhood as fertility, naturalness, maternal love, nurturance and reproduction. The association between "woman" and "mother" does not necessarily overlap as closely in other societies as it does in Western society. Analysis of family patterns has shown that there is a wide range in the composition of domestic groups and in the assignment of particular tasks of child rearing across societies.

Moore calls for attention to be paid to the fact that not only mothers care for children but also

1. that domestic units may not necessarily be built around biological mothers and their children, and
2. that the concept of "mother" in any society may not be constructed through maternal love, daily childcare or physical proximity (Moore, 1988:26).

Moore emphasizes the point that "... culture constructs the possibilities of human experience, including those of giving birth and motherhood" (Moore, 1988:28). Not every culture confines the processes of life-giving to women or the "domestic" domain alone: They can be social concerns of society as a whole. Physiology presents possibilities; it does not determine cultural elaboration (Moore, 1988:30).

Fatherhood as a concept is also under close scrutiny. It is more clearly a social status than is motherhood and has widely varying rights and duties, privileges and obligations. The cross-cultural variability in the concept of fatherhood is less easily obscured by generalized notions of what is "natural" or universal than in the case of motherhood.

Contemporary anthropologists are saying that the concepts of motherhood and fatherhood are not merely given in natural processes but are cultural constructions elaborated differently across societies. **In the same way, childhood is a variable construction**. It varies historically and culturally. We cannot describe its hues without deconstructing our notions of motherhood, fatherhood and the family. What we in southern Africa need, of course, is a description of each of these categories that gives an account of the prevailing forces of this century: How these forces have pared down what once were rich and elaborate family connections to the bare minimum. It is thus not possible to analyze the nature of the family without simultaneously analyzing or at least understanding, the role of the state.

The state, nowadays, determines where and how families constitute themselves. It does this through its legislation with regard to tax, social security, housing, employment, education, health provision and so on. Whether we choose to have wide, smooth and tarred roads criss-crossing the landscape, or make sure that every child has enough to eat, is a state decision. We are, as voters, responsible for that choice.

This century women have increasingly become the objects of study and have often been described as subordinate and passive. Moore (1988:171) documents a change in this approach: "This view of women as passive and non-political has been strongly questioned as the social sciences move away from a predominant concern with forms of women's oppression towards a consideration of the forms of women's resistance." More recently, women's firm stand in the face of state oppression has come into focus and studies are concentrating on women's action, as in their demand for the vote, for university education or their rights to live and work where they choose.

There are but few studies that similarly grant children an active role in determining their life paths. A central concept in the work of the sociologist Anthony Giddens is that every person is a "competent human agent". This, he says, is because "human actors routinely and chronically constitute and reconstitute their qualities as agents in recurrent processes of social interaction" (Giddens, 1989:283). And so do children.

In working with children in Southern Africa I have been impressed by three facets of children's experience within families:

1. the intricacy and effectiveness of children's strategies;
2. the power of particular adults to sustain children's growth, that is, the importance for children of core members within sets of relationships;
3. the net of possibilities that societies articulate in terms of kinship for the provision of sustaining relationships.

Each of these has, of course, a negative side which can predominate at any single time. For example,

1. the impotence of children in the face of force, authority and abuse;
2. the vulnerability of central figures in the face of poverty, oppression, ill health and despair;
3. tears in the net and the foreclosure of options based on class, gender, race and so on.

Children utilize kinship links as a resource and nurture relationships that bind them. It is not often that a child actually chooses with whom to live (although some communities enshrine the child's right to choose with whom to live as do the Tonga of the Zambezi Valley (see Reynolds, 1991)). But frequently the child negotiates close ties with a particular adult: The sustenance of the relationship is thus a two-way process. I have written about these kinds of bonds among the Tonga (Reynolds, 1991) and the Zezuru (Reynolds, 1986). Children actively participate in the struggles of individuals and households to maximize their resources and opportunities under the circumstances in which they find themselves.

In this paper I report one piece of analysis that has emerged from the early stages of a piece of research that I am conducting with university students. In working with the initial sample of students, I used Malinowski's definition of the family as a base from which to explore their experiences within families. The aim of the study is to examine the nature of social support that young people, who have suffered trauma related to political activities, can draw upon.

Using the definition as a tool of analysis I separated each function and examined the first 20 years of each student's life in relation to that function. Malinowski's definition does not fit each student's life well. Each of the three functions can have its own history. Four of the students did not grow up in nuclear families characterized as bounded social units in a physical location with specific sets of emotional bonds. Their histories as given in Diagrams 1 to 4 are complex. It is amazing how adaptable they had to be in order to cope with series of changes in their bonding, in their places of residence and in the nature of the social units within which they were placed. The other three students grew up in families that fit more neatly under Malinowski's definition. The fathers of two of these students are teachers and the father of the third was a worker on the railways. Among the fathers of the four, one was a salesman/ clerk, one was a labourer on the mines and two had died.

Each diagram depicts a student from birth to 20 years of age. The first ring shows the students' position within the circle of close bonds with other family members. Where the bond continues for 20 years, the circle is unbroken. Where the bond is cut because of death or migrancy or other changes, the circle is shown as a dotted line, the idea here being to depict an "absent presence" — a loss, not necessarily a forgetting. Where a new bond is forged it is shown in relation to the age of the child at the time of its establishment. The second circle shows the physical places in which the child lived during the 20 years. The third circle shows the child within the family as a social unit and, again, changes in membership are shown. If we consider how often the individual experiences of women and children are obscured by the analysis of the family or of the household as a unit, we begin to see the value of focusing on the individual and unwrapping institutions from their layers of gaudy definition. We cannot presume to intervene in the best interests of the young until we can at least describe with some accuracy the reality of their lives.

Given the history of dislocation, migrancy, poverty and disruption that the majority of people in South Africa have experienced it is likely that the histories of the four students (as depicted in Diagrams 1 to 4) represent the intricacy and complexity of many children's lives. My own work among seven-year-old children in Crossroads depicts similar change and movement for families as units and for individuals within and across sets of kin (Reynolds, 1989).

Jones (1990) documents the impact of the migrancy system of the family from the children's point of view. He traces the number of times a sample of children living in Lwandle hostel in the Cape have moved and the switches among their caretakers. He shatters the impression given by a general reading of the literature on the nature of households in rural South Africa, namely that children lead relatively staid and sedentary lives in the rural areas, albeit with only their mothers, kin, or substitute figures. Jones (1990:123) comments, "our vision is thus one of absent and mobile parents, usually only fathers, and children who remain secure within the nurturing net proffered by the agnatic

DIAGRAM 1: CHILD A

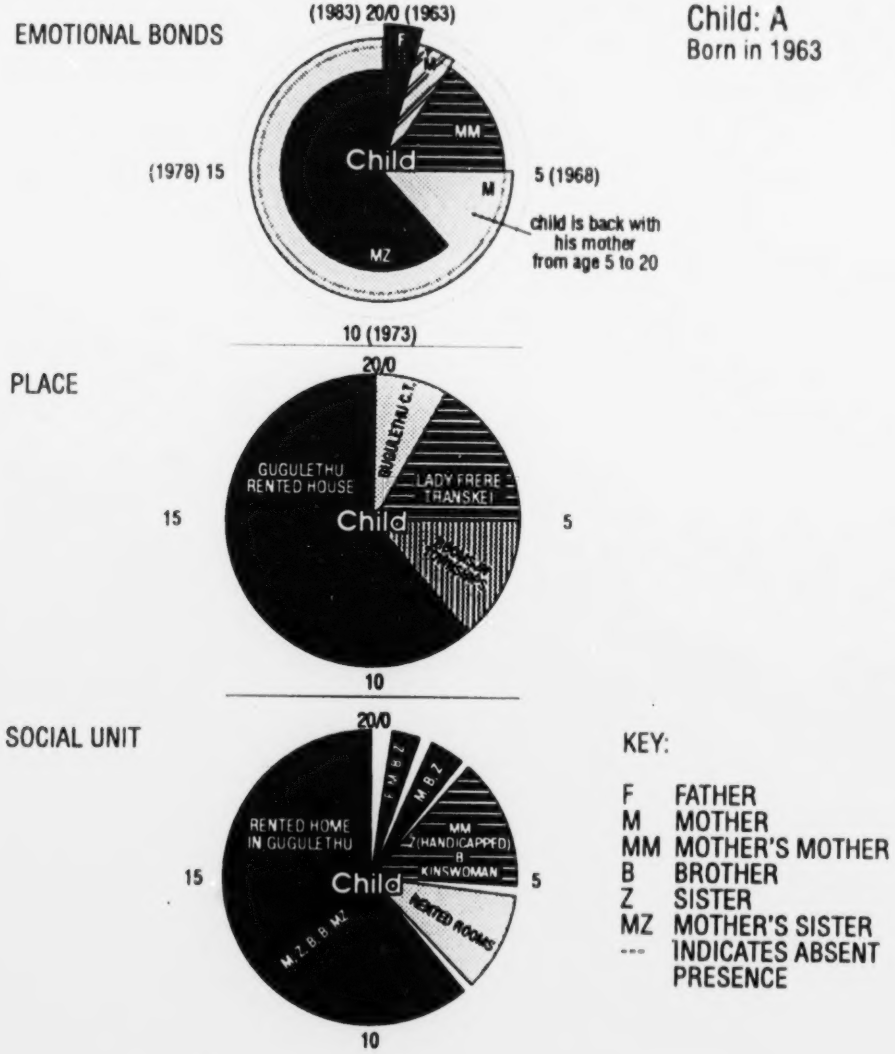

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DIAGRAM 2: CHILD B

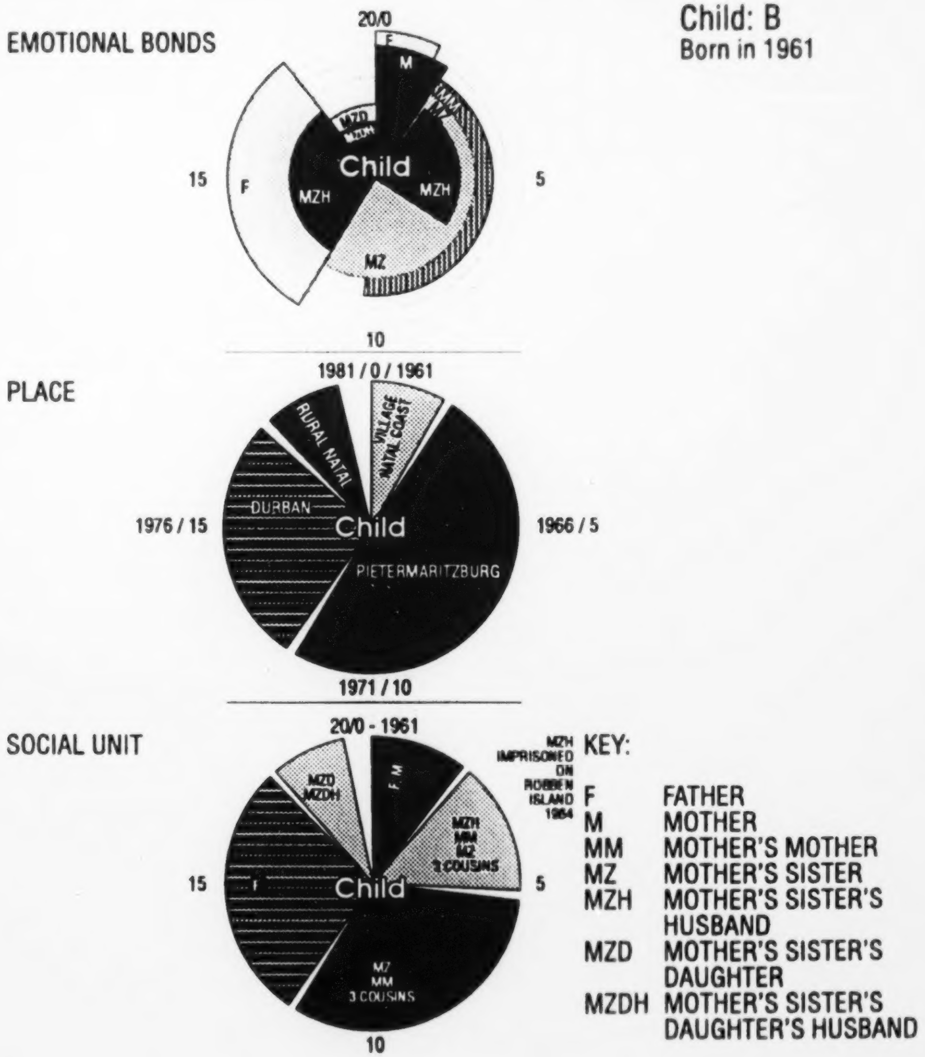

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DIAGRAM 3: CHILD C

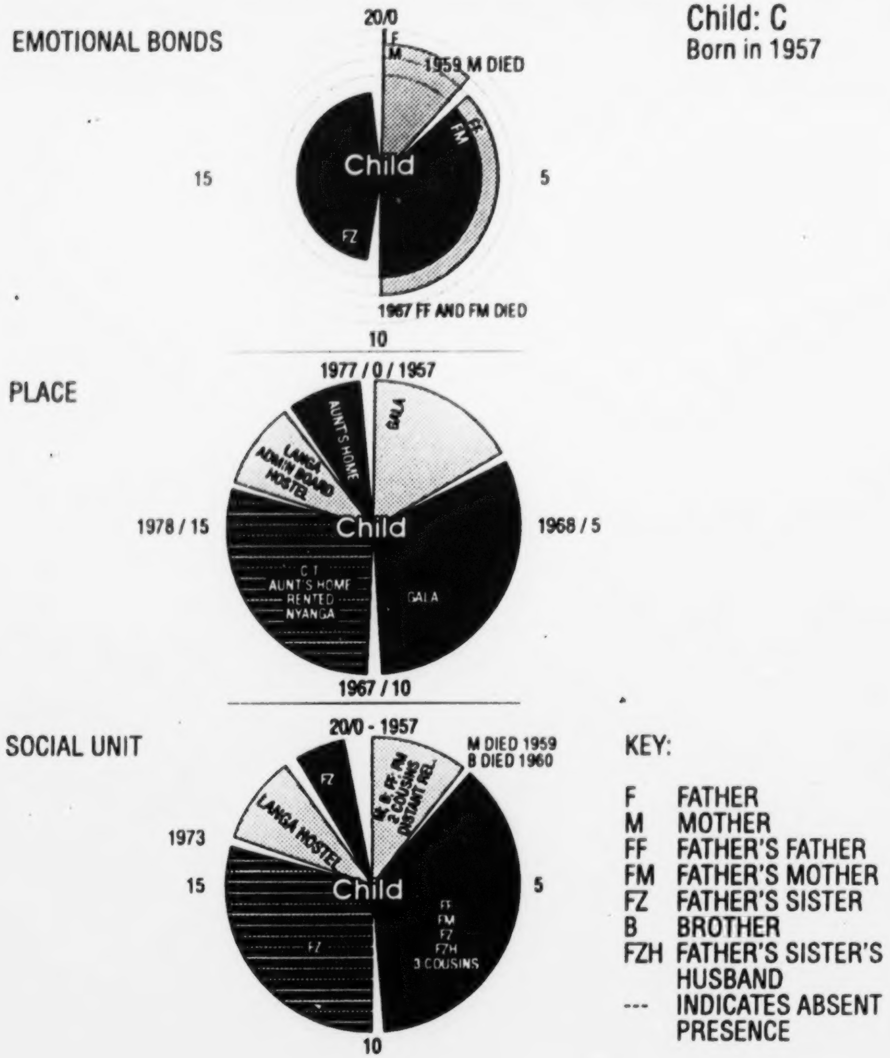

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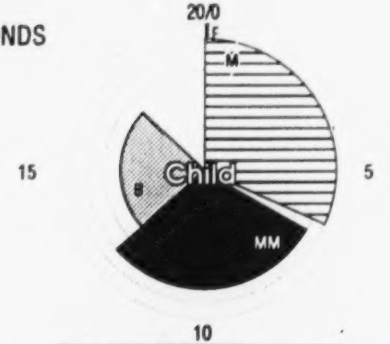
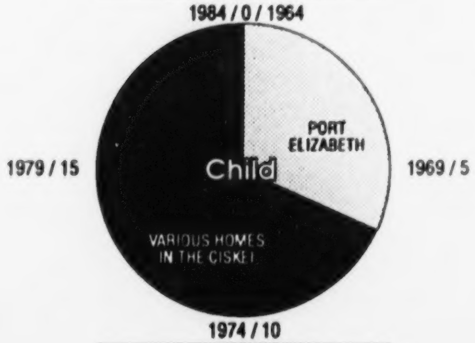
DIAGRAM 4: CHILD D

Child: D
Born in 1964

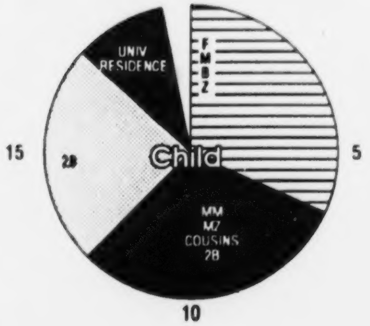
EMOTIONAL BONDS



PLACE



SOCIAL UNIT



KEY:

F	FATHER
M	MOTHER
MM	MOTHER'S MOTHER
B	BROTHER
Z	SISTER
MZ	MOTHER'S SISTER

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household or some other form of extended family grouping". Jones points out two reasons for our failure to document the actual experiences of children. One is the nature of research projects that hone in on people's lives at a particular time, failing to account for mobility across time. The second is that most studies concentrate on households as basic units of analysis.

Jones (1990) also traces fluctuating relations between parents and children and the lack of security in relationships built up between children and those from whom they sought succour and support. He shows that even for those children "who enjoyed relative degrees of **residential** stability over time, the quality of the relationship which they formed with significant others around them, and the relationships themselves, were clearly far from constant" (1990:133). Sporadic separation from parents and the pain of leaving one important person to live with another, plays havoc with children's emotions. Parents are forced by circumstance to choose among their children, allowing some to be kept with them while parting with others. He said "it is not unusual for one or a number of siblings in a family to experience little separation from parents whilst others in the same family are isolated for long periods of time" (Jones, 1990:142).

In order to describe childhood experiences we need to trace the particulars in relation to the fluidity, fragmentation and mobility that have characterized so many communities in the country. A redefinition of the families may be necessary. Perhaps the family can be defined as a cluster of relationships which is distinguished by connections across time that operate in accord with kin ties that have proved supple in their accommodation and flexible in their role allocation.

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VI

The family, socialization and rapid social change:

Transforming notions of "respect" in the social identity of township youth

Catherine Campbell

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper reports on research in progress into the changing face of the township family as agent of socialization of youth. In particular it focuses on transforming notions of "respect" for adults in township families, an issue that has emerged as one of the central themes in the preliminary analysis of research findings.

The research situates itself against the backdrop of a pilot study into the changing face of working class township family life (Campbell, 1989). The purpose of this pilot study was to investigate the transformation of township family life, within the context of economic and political pressures on working class black South Africans. A dominant theme emerging from the pilot study was what informants regarded as the changing nature of inter-generational relationships. Parents complained they had no control over their children. They referred repeatedly to the breakdown of respect, which they regarded as a pillar of traditional African social relations. Closely related to this issue was the transformation of structures of authority/obedience within families, as well as the changing face of traditionally defined hierarchical power relations of age and gender.

The pilot study focused on the response of both parents and youth to changing power relations within families. Parental responses varied from bewilderment to anger to fear. Many parents said that they lacked confidence when trying to advise their children in a world that was changing at an alarming pace. This extract from the interview with Mr G, a 50 year old labourer, summarizes the response of several parents:

> My mind comes to a standstill when I think about the young ones. I am always confused ... the way they respond to us adults looks to us as if they are possessed and I have a fear that there is nothing to be done to stop them ... I end up shouting randomly at all of them, hoping that one of them will understand my shouting and change his image ... I always get angry, but being angry does not help and I eventually get depressed and hopeless.

The youths' response to their parents varied. Most still believed it was important to respect adults, but this was a far more conditional respect than many parents believed was their due. Some youth simply despised their parents for what they regarded as their hopelessly old-fashioned views, and on this basis were dismissive of parental advice.

The current research project was established against the background of this pilot study. Its aims include the following two questions which are addressed in this paper:

i) How have conditions of rapid social change affected the family's traditional role in the socialization of township youth?

ii) Is the family's influence on the world view and behaviour of its members being superseded by competing social influences (such as the peer group, political groupings and so on)?[1]

The body of this paper is divided into three sections. In Section 2 details of the empirical study (theoretical framework, informants, interview procedures and data analysis) are outlined. In Section 3 some of the preliminary empirical findings of the study are presented, and Section 4 outlines some tentative conclusions.

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[1] The current project also explores a third question: Does the family have more influence on the world view and behaviour of young women than young men? This aspect of the research is beyond the scope of this paper.

2. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

2.1 *THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK*

This study is located within the subdiscipline of social psychology. Its starting point is the theoretical framework of social identity theory in the Bristol tradition (Tajfel 1981, 1982; Tajfel & Turner 1979; Turner 1987), which was extended for the purposes of this study (see Campbell, 1992 for a detailed account of the way in which the theory was extended). Tajfel (1972:31). defines social identity as "the individual's knowledge that he (sic) belongs to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance to him of group membership". A social group is defined as "two or more individuals who share a common social identification of themselves, or, which is nearly the same thing, perceive themselves to be members of the same social category" (Turner, 1982:15). Group memberships are located against the background of a set of conflictual power relations of gender, race and class (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Leonard, 1984).

The most important aspect of social identity theory for the present research is its potential for linking group membership to action. Each group membership, such as the family, the peer group, or the church, is associated with a particular range of constraints and possibilities on behaviour, referred to as "recipes for living" or "behavioural options".

Social identity is situation-specific. The self consists of a loose association of **group memberships**, each one associated with a **range of behavioural options**, with each group membership becoming salient in a different range of situations. Behaviour cannot be understood independently of its social context. For the purposes of this study, this point is operationalized as an analytic tool by regarding youths' behavioural choices as responses to challenges posed by the social and material life world. Social identity is seen as an adaptive resource, the process whereby the individual responds to the **adaptative challenges** or day-to-day problems of his or her life circumstances. The individual engages with these problems according to the behavioural options associated with the group membership that happens to be salient at the time.

In a society in unusually rapid transition the behavioural options associated with the old social order may not be appropriate for dealing with the adaptive challenges of the emerging new social order. In particular, the pilot study suggests that youth may sometimes reject their parents' tried and tested "recipes for living" (associated with the group membership of the family). A range of competing group memberships offer behavioural possibilities that youth may consider more adaptive for the demands of the rapidly changing social world. The pilot study suggested that township life of the early 1990s presents youth with a different set of demands and challenges to those that characterized the formative years of their parents.

Against this background the aim of the current research project is to examine the extent to which youth regard family recipes for living as appropriate for their day-to-day life challenges and the extent to which they adopt, reject or refashion the family's recipes for living. In addition it will examine "competing" social groupings, such as friends or comrades, which present youth with recipes for living that are considered more adaptive than those associated with the family. (When questioned specifically about the influence of "the family", informants almost always referred to the influence of parents. This paper follows this practice. Unless specifically stated otherwise, references to family recipes for living refer specifically to parents' recipes for living.)

2.2 *INFORMANTS*

The study drew its subjects from young township people aged between 17 and 23 years (20 young men and 20 young women). Throughout this report, the term "youth" will be used to refer to this age group. These are the years straddling late adolescence and early adulthood, and the age at which many young township people are reaching the end of their school careers, and are faced with decisions regarding their future as adults. The study aimed to assess the extent to which family "recipes" would influence the social identity of these young people. It was hypothesized that by this stage they would have had some opportunity for independent exploration of the world. This would have enabled them to test out what their families had taught them. They would also have been exposed to a range of alternative social groupings offering competing recipes for living.

The selection of a sample in the Durban area was severely constrained by the contemporary climate in Natal. During 1989 and 1990, the years in which the interviews were conducted, hundreds of people were killed in Durban alone in the intense political conflict that rocked Natal's townships. Under such conditions researchers were faced with limitations regarding both their access to subjects, and the range of data-gathering methods available to them (Zulu, 1989). Access to township families was only possible after a lengthy process of introduction, discussion and so on. Conventional sampling techniques were out of the question. The present research sample was recruited through a wide range of township contacts.[2]

2.3 *INTERVIEWS*

The data were gathered by means of open-ended, semi-structured interviews which incorporated two sections. The first section focused on a range of general questions which covered the following areas: biographical details, family composition, general questions about family relationships, personal life history questions, the subjects' personal and social ambitions, and broad questions about the subjects' interests and day-to-day time allocations. During the course of this first phase of the questionnaire the researcher was able to compile a list of the informants' most important group memberships. The second phase of the questionnaire consisted of more structured questions aimed at eliciting the range of possibilities and constraints on behaviour associated with each group membership. The interviews were conducted by the researcher and a Zulu-speaking co-interviewer, and ranged from four to nine hours in length.

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[2] One of the conditions negotiated with informants was that their names and area of residence would remain confidential.

2.4 ANALYSIS OF DATA

Interviews were analyzed by means of thematic analysis, using a coding frame that was developed against the background of the theoretical framework outlined above.[3] The final aim of the analysis was to identify the behavioural options facing township youth, and to link these behavioural options to particular adaptive challenges facing them as well as the range of group memberships available for meeting these challenges.

Analysis of the data suggests that the social identity of township youth is forged in response to 20 adaptive challenges. These challenges should be seen against the backdrop of poverty and social instability characteristic of contemporary township life, at a time when traditional social category memberships which parents would seek to transmit to youth are often inadequate for dealing with these challenges. These 20 adaptive challenges within which the interview data were classified fell under three overarching clusters or themes: "constructing a code of conduct", "networking" and "planning for the future".

A. CONSTRUCTING A CODE OF CONDUCT

This cluster included adaptive challenges referring to the construction of conduct in the following areas of life:

1. Crime
2. Political conflict
3. Interpersonal conflict
4. Freedom of movement
5. Interpersonal conduct
6. Sexual behaviour
7. Alcohol

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[3] For a detailed account of the development of the coding frame that informed the interview analysis, the reader is referred to Campbell (1992). Analysis of the interview data yielded 7 500 responses, each of which was classified according to seven categories. The three most important categories were those of behavioural option, adaptive challenge and group membership.

B. *PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE*

This cluster involved informants' accounts of the following aspects of their own, their family's and the community's future:

8. Community improvement
9. Education
10. Personal family life
11. Career plans

C. *NETWORKING*

This cluster referred to the establishing of social support networks in the interests of the following life demands:

12. Educational assistance
13. Emotional support
14. Having fun
15. Broadening one's horizons
16. Guidance
17. Material support
18. Political identity
19. Choosing lovers
20. Choosing friends

Each of these adaptive challenges was associated with a range of behavioural options. An example from each of the challenge clusters is included below:

A1: Constructing a code of conduct around criminal activities. Behavioural options in this category included the following: Should I participate in criminal activities? Should I participate in comrades' crime prevention activities? Should I participate in Peoples' Court punishments of criminals?

B7: Networking: establishing a social circle of friends. Behavioural options in this category included the following: Should I befriend a drinker? Should I befriend someone who is disrespectful of adults? Should I make friends with school drop-outs?

C2: Planning for the future: plans for education. Behavioural options included the following: Should I drop out of school? Should I re-write my matric to try and get a better mark? Should I try and get a part-time job and study through correspondence college?

The following 12 in-groups were identified as the most common group memberships providing youth with behavioural options for meeting the 20 adaptive challenges: CHURCH; DECENT CITIZEN (carrying connotations of respectability, a non-violent approach to conflict resolution, and an attitude of humility associated with seeing oneself as "one of the people" as opposed to a proud person who feels superior to others); EDUCATED PEOPLE; FAMILY; GENDER (stereotypes of male or female gender); FRIENDS; LOVERS (girlfriends and boyfriends); COMRADES (politically conscious youth, sympathetic to the Mass Democratic Movement); BLACK PEOPLE; YOUNGER GENERATION; URBAN DWELLER; DUDES OR *PHANTSULAS* (non-political rival male "*style*" groups associated with particular clothing and behaviour, e.g. dancing, and attitudes to women). Categories mentioned too infrequently to be represented separately (including teenage parent, resident of a disadvantaged and troubled community, membership of sports clubs, and community conscious citizen) were included in a MISCELLANEOUS category.

3. TENTATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS: THE FAMILY, SOCIALIZATION AND RAPID SOCIAL CHANGE

As has been emphasized, the project is currently in the data analysis stage, and comments on the findings are thus tentative in nature. At this stage, the empirical data appear to support the project's initial hypothesis that rapid social change has affected the family's traditional role in the socialization of youth. At the outset it must be emphasized that the term "tradition" is used with certain qualifications. Spiegel and Boonzaier (1988) warn that the notion of tradition is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the past. So-called "traditional social relations" may for example sometimes simply be a reinterpretation of the past which may serve a variety of functions. An example of one such way in which traditions are mobilized is in the use of claims to tradition by powerful social groupings to justify unequal power relations. This point is particularly relevant to changing relations in township families, where the notion of tradition is often drawn on by the older generation in justifying authority over the younger generation. It is also drawn on by men to justify their power over women (Campbell, 1990). Notwithstanding this, from the perspective of a social psychologist concerned with individuals' subjective accounts of their experiences, subjects certainly do operate with a notion of what they refer to as "tradition", and it is in this sense that the term is used in this paper.

Another potential misinterpretation would be to assume a static "before and after" notion of history that implied that there was ever such a thing as a coherent and identifiable "traditional social structure" in the past, which has been replaced by a "modern social structure", in such a way that the two could be regarded as analytically separate entities. One of the aims of the current process of data analysis is to examine the way in which social change has presented youth with day-to-day situations in which certain of the recipes for living developed by their parents in a different social and historical context are no longer appropriate coping mechanisms. As a result youth are having (at short historical notice) to develop new norms and attitudes, which might sometimes conflict with the norms and attitudes their parents would approve of. However, while the project will in this way emphasize **discontinuities** between the life circumstances faced by youth, and those their parents grew up in, it will be sensitive also to **continuities** between the new coping skills that youth develop and the coping skills that were appropriate for their parents.

Evidence for the changing role of the family in shaping the social identity of youth is closely interlinked with evidence for transformations in the notion of respect for older people. Respect is one of the cornerstones of traditional African social relationships, particularly within the family. In the interviews the phenomenon of respect was frequently cited to refer to a range of rights and obligations, usually with reference to social relations based on age and gender hierarchies. The central theme to emerge in analysis of youth's accounts of family membership was that of respect for members of the older generation. Implicit in the interview data was a notion of respect for older people that prescribed the acceptance of the following three guidelines for youth:

i) Reverence for older people: Young people should treat older people with a certain degree of awe.

ii) Obedience to older people: Young people should obey older people at all times.

iii) Acceptance of older people as valuable social guides: Parents have knowledge, expertise and wisdom about the world that form a useful resource for guiding their children.

At a superficial level the traditional family value of respect did indeed appear to be the central guide of youth's behaviour. Every informant repeatedly cited the importance of respect in their relationships with their parents. However, closer examination reveals evidence of a range of challenges to the family's notion of respect, with alternative possibilities being provided by a range of competing group memberships.

3.1 *SOCIAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE FAMILY AS AGENT OF SOCIALIZATION*

Interview data suggested that the family's traditional role in socialization was based on a number of interrelated assumptions, which are not always applicable in the townships of today as a matter of course. These assumptions include the following: Young people should respect old people; parents have authority over the youth by virtue of their age; there is a fair degree of continuity between the experience of parents and children; by virtue of their knowledge, expertise and wisdom about the world, the older generation has something of value to teach the youth. The interview data highlighted five factors influencing the family's changing role in socialization.

Education

The majority of working class township youth have more education than their parents. There is a tendency amongst youth to regard their less educated parents as unsophisticated and out of touch.

> If you are not educated the community regards you as uncivilized. (Male 2, 19 years)
>
> The difference between me and my father is that he did not get the education I am struggling for ... if you engage in discussion with such people you find they are quite narrow in their thinking ... their arguments are quite boring compared to boys of my age. (Male 18, 18 years)

There was evidence that educated people are regarded much more highly in the community than uneducated people. Thus parents belong to a poorly valued out-group, namely the "poorly educated". Furthermore, the majority of informants' parents were labourers or domestic workers. Such work is also not highly regarded in the community, or by the youth in particular. Thus parents also belong to the poorly valued out-group of "labourers and domestic workers".

Urbanization

The vast majority of parents of youth in the 17-23 year age group at the time of the interviews (late 1980s and early 1990s) were born in rural areas, and came to the towns in their late teens to find work. Thus the vast majority of youth are township born, as opposed to their parents who were rural born. Many informants made a sharp distinction between rural and urban people, classing themselves in the latter camp. They dismissively referred to rural people as "blind" or "in the dark" or "ignorant".

> On the farm they think they have got nothing to fight for. They have their own cow, their own space, their own chief. And they think they have got everything they could dream of. Such a person knows nothing about their rights, about the needs of black people - such a person is content to be an oppressed labourer. (Male 6, 22 years)

Growing political conscientization of township youth

Several of the informants drew a sharp contrast between what they regarded as their parents' passive tolerance of racial discrimination and economic disadvantage on the one hand, and their own active resistance to these phenomena on the other.

> Old people were scared of the white man. They see him as someone like God, that you have never met before. They never see that what the white man says to them might be good or bad, right or wrong. It has never occurred to them to question anything. (Male 6, 22 years)

> Our parents say that the youth of today have changed. When they were young there were no strikes, these days there are many. At work black people are not given enough money, yet they work hard. In the old days blacks did not complain about this. In these days they do ... there is nothing the old people can teach the youth now ... the youth must learn from the other kids who know better ... Parents feel bad about this. I know this because I have seen my mother crying. (Female 13, 23 years)

Some young people direct some of their anger and frustration arising from their social conditions at their parents, blaming their parents for failing to fight for a better world for their children.

An additional factor which is particularly relevant to the current conflict in the Natal townships is the issue of splits between traditionalist Inkatha parents on the one hand, and their radical anti-Inkatha youth on the other. Some informants deal with this issue by hiding their political activities from their parents. In families where such conflicts come into the open, they have the potential to cause untold havoc in families. Several informants referred to bitter conflicts with Inkatha parents. In one case this conflict was so severe that a father had actually left home, and refused to maintain the household any longer, when the rest of the family refused his instruction that the family disown a politically radical son.

Unemployment and poverty

The high incidence of unemployment often constrains young people from setting up their own households according to "traditional" family patterns. Unemployed young men commented that they were not able to consider marriage because few young women would be keen to marry an unemployed man. Furthermore, such a young man would struggle to raise money for *lobola* (one of the foundations of traditional family formation). Unemployed young men were usually unable to pay maintenance for their children (although where possible their own parents would help out with such maintenance). The burden of caring for babies born to unmarried teenagers often fell on the young woman's family. Thus, for young men in particular, there is evidence for an on-going erosion of old-fashioned patriarchal family roles.

Growing number of female-headed families

The influence of the family over teenage sons is considerably diminished in female-headed families. With the growing number of female-headed families mothers are having to play an increasingly central role in family leadership. Despite this reality, mothers are still regarded as second class citizens in a community where patriarchal ideals dominate. As a result mothers are often not accorded the respect and authority that would be accorded to fathers. For example, mothers are often not accorded the authority necessary to discipline their teenage sons, who often run wild as a result, without the stern hand of a traditionally feared father figure to keep them in check.

> Mother failed to discipline us teenage boys on her own. Boys need a father to discipline them. If father had lived with us there would have been a difference. There were many times that we took no notice of mother, unlike the notice we would have taken of a father. (Male 7, 23 years)

The situation is somewhat different for teenage girls, a point that will be dealt with at length in the final report.

3.2 *THE FAMILY AND COMPETING SOCIAL INFLUENCES*

To what extent is the family's influence on the world view and behaviour of its members being superseded by competing social influences? Besides the family, what is the range of social groupings available to township youth in the construction of a social identity? Interview data suggests that the group memberships of comrades, the urban younger generation, friends and lovers often present youth with the possibility of challenging informants' conceptions of the traditional notion of respect for parents.

As was outlined in the theoretical section above, the model of social identity emerging from the data is one of young township people selecting and interpreting the group memberships that make up their social identity in response to the three clusters of adaptive challenges outlined above. Each of these is now discussed in turn.

Constructing a code of conduct

In relation to forging a code of conduct the major issue reported by youth was that of respect: youth's respect for adults, women's respect for men, younger siblings' respect for older siblings and so on. At a superficial level the traditional family value of respect appeared to be a central guide of youth's behaviour. However, close examination of the data revealed variations in the interpretations of this notion by individual subjects. It also revealed disjunctions between subjects' lip service to this notion in conversation, and their day-to-day behaviour. Thus, for example, many informants spoke of the importance of a young person always obeying members of the older generation, but then proceeded to refer to a range of incidents where they had not done so.

Thus, for example, one informant spoke frequently and elaborately of the importance that youth show adults respect and obey them at all times.

> My family taught me to respect and obey old people. If they send me somewhere I will go with no hesitation. I have done this since I was a child. I respect all people in this way. (Male 20, 20 years)

On the other hand he referred to an occasion where he had kicked an older woman, breaking her leg, because she had shouted at him for taking a short cut across her garden. In relation to his parents, who were elderly people who had retired to a rural area and did not pose any challenge to his independence, he was extremely committed to the notion of respect for his elders. In a situation where an older woman had tried to restrict his behaviour in what he thought was an unjustified way, he was quite content to abandon this behavioural guideline.

However, it appeared that while the notion of respect no longer functioned as a valued blueprint for action, it served as a key conceptual reference point for youth. As such it served as a cognitive and affective baseline that sustained them in the on-going process of formulating adaptive recipes for living. While the process of integrating such new recipes for living into a coherent framework continued, their parents' notion of respect provided

(i) a reference point in relation to which new norms could be formulated and articulated (in this sense it provided youth with a sense of continuity with their own history), and

(ii) moral support.

In this regard, the notion of respect was but one of a range of rhetorical mechanisms used by informants in giving an account of their identities. Often informants defined themselves in terms of clichés which they might not have been seriously committed to in their everyday lives, or that social conditions prevented them from turning into concrete programmes of action.

The on-going transformation and reformulation of the notion of respect, and of the so-called traditional guidelines for behaviour as represented by their parents, were more marked in relation to age hierarchies, than to gender hierarchies. Patriarchal norms and attitudes were still maintained in the attitudes of both young men and young women. In relation to gender, traditional family guidelines outlining the respect and obedience that women should show to men were still an integral part of the informants' day-to-day recipes for living. Such guidelines were reinforced particularly strongly by the church ("We must obey men because they are great. The Bible tells us that we should listen to them." F13). They were also reinforced by the entire range of non-familial group memberships, including political groupings, despite the latter's stated commitment to the democratization of all social relationships.

Evidence for resistance to the notion of respect for parental advice was particularly strong in relation to the adaptive challenges of constructing a code of conduct for sexual behaviour (an issue of particular concern for young women), of constructing a code of conduct for both political conflict and interpersonal conflict (especially with regard to the issue of violence, a concern of boys rather than girls and related to options such as fighting and carrying knives) and the challenge of constructing a code of conduct around alcohol (and dagga).

In the area of sexual socialization the degree of youth's respect for their parents' recipes for living was a particularly complex issue: Parents and teenagers did not explicitly discuss sex with one another. Young people had to rely on a variety of variously reliable sources in their sexual socialization. For many young women their only source of advice was their peer group. Particularly those without older brothers did not get protection or advice from their families. Furthermore, they were so well socialized in the notion of female deference that many appeared unable or unwilling to protect their interests in their relationships with men. Thus, for example, female informants spoke frequently of physical violence and forced sex at the hands of their boyfriends, and of men who denied paternity of babies. Several of the young men said they would be reluctant to admit paternity of babies if their girlfriend fell pregnant.

Networking

The issue of establishing a social support network for assistance in facing day-to-day problems is another adaptive challenge around which township youth construct their social identities. Under circumstances where a range of structural constraints such as poverty and lack of opportunity stand in the way of achieving the goals that township youth have set for themselves, the establishment of a social support network becomes an important aspect of survival.

This was reflected in the reasons informants offered for their choice of group memberships. Thus, for example, friends were chosen and appreciated for the encouragement they would give to informants who were struggling at school; for the help they could give each other in doing homework. Informants looked for the type of friend that would be prepared to lend small amounts of money in times of hardship, or even food and clothing when times became really hard. (Several of the informants arrived at the interview in borrowed clothes.) They cited the importance of church membership in relation to getting testimonials from priests for job applications, or for ensuring that they would receive a proper burial. Many young men made a point of choosing friends that would "keep them out of trouble".

It is in the area of emotional and material support that family membership is a crucial resource for township youth. The great majority of interviews touched on the on-going sacrifices that parents had made for their children, and strong ties of loyalty among family members. It was the key role played by families in this regard that made family membership the most valued group membership of informants even though it is not always the most influential one. This point is illustrated by a quotation from the interview with Male 10, a 20 year old man who had been very dismissive of the views of his "ignorant" and "uneducated" parents:

> The first duty that I have is that I was born from my parents, and they brought me up, and now they are old I must make a point of supporting them, and fulfilling their needs. (Male 10, 20 years)

Furthermore, youth's gratitude for the suffering their parents had undergone on their behalf often resulted in a sense of obligation to obey family norms as a token of appreciation.

> I would not like to do anything that would upset my family, they have sacrificed a lot for me. I have to be careful of everything I do. (Female 19, 18 years)

Planning for the future

Subjects invariably had a dim view of their present circumstances, and defined themselves in terms of their plans for uplifting themselves and/or the community. Almost all informants defined their social identity around the importance of having a "bright future". This was another phrase that cropped up again and again in the interviews, along with the terms "success" and "progress". It will be suggested that this preoccupation with the future is a response by many young people to the physical and material deprivation of their present lives. It is reinforced by their parents who take vicarious pride in their hopes that their children will achieve all that the parents failed to achieve in their own lives. ("Mother and father want someone from the family to be educated, so that our family can be respected by the community." (Female 10, 19 years)

Views of what would constitute a bright future, success or progress were closely related to informants' attributions for the plight of working class township families. The interviews suggest the possibility of grouping the informants in three groups according to their perception of the causes of their social conditions, and of the solution to the problems facing working class township communities. It will be suggested that it is the second grouping of youth that mounted the most concerted resistance to many of their parents' recipes for living.

1. The a-political grouping refers to those who did not regard themselves or their families as occupying a disadvantaged position. These informants did not regard being a black South African as a particular disadvantage, neither did they see their township community or their families as having significant social problems.

2. The politicized grouping rooted its explanation of the working class' day-to-day struggle for survival in social, political and economic factors. This grouping looked to large-scale political and economic changes as the key to improving their lot. Members were more concerned with social change than personal advancement. They devoted their energies to political organization, and were prepared to make great personal sacrifices to meet this end. To quote from the interview with a young comrade who spoke of the detention and torture of his friends, and the death of other comrades in conflicts with the police:

   > I would like to die when I am old, but now as I have devoted myself to the struggle I know that I will be killed by the Boer or his puppets. This means I will die young. I have devoted myself to being a comrade so I cannot be afraid of anything. (Male 10, 20 years)

3 The third grouping had an individualistic approach to social problems. They attributed the plight of working class families to the problems faced by particular families and their individual members as opposed to the community as a whole. This group had an individualistic notion of both personal and community improvement, saying that hard-working individuals who improved themselves would be in the position to "uplift" the community through their individual efforts, and to encourage

> and help other individuals to succeed. As opposed to the politicized grouping who expressed their hopes for the future in terms of social goals, this grouping spoke in terms of comfortable houses, money, cars and providing their children with those opportunities and comforts they had lacked in their own childhoods. (A phrase that was used particularly often in interviews was the desire that their children "should have everything they want".)

It is the second grouping that came into the greatest conflict with their parents. Their relatively unpoliticized parents often ascribed their own life problems to lack of education, rather than broader political factors. They urged their children to focus energy on individual upliftment through education, rather than what they regarded as dangerous political activities with an uncertain outcome. Another reason for the antipathy of many parents to their childrens' politicized outlook was a well-founded fear for their safety. The decade of the 1980s saw thousands of township youth either killed or imprisoned for their political convictions. Furthermore, the youth's assertive and radical critique of society starkly contradicted the fearful and timid acceptance of the *status quo* of many older working class parents.

A notable feature in the interviews was the paucity of adult identity figures. Several of the informants could not name one adult known to them personally, who served as a role model for the way they would like to be as adults. However, several of them named their mothers as their heroes, expressing deep admiration for the way in which their mothers had succeeded in holding their families together under conditions of poverty and instability.

Competing and complementary groups?

The final report will contain a more detailed analysis of the way in which the group memberships such as comrades, the urban younger generation, friends and lovers often present youth with behavioural alternatives to the traditional notion of unconditional reverence and obedience for adults implicit in the concept of respect. Under the influence of these group memberships youth are rejecting or redefining many of the traditional family recipes for living in the light of the range of challenges presented to them by the transforming social world.

The report will also contain a detailed analysis of the gendered nature of the challenge to traditional family recipes for living. It will be suggested that young women appeared less likely to challenge these behavioural guidelines than their male counterparts. On those occasions when they do challenge the family, the manner in which young women do so tends to be far more subtle and covert than those of men.

While youth did consider other group memberships as more useful than the family in relation to many of the demands of modern life, in other respects they still valued their parents' insights into certain matters. It was particularly in the areas of good manners in interpersonal interactions and gender relations that parents were considered as appropriate role models by their offspring.

> There are lots of laws that our family can teach us ... things like the importance of respecting parents, knowing how to greet old people in the street, how women should behave, how one ought to behave in the street ... But when it comes to politics, this is an area where the young should teach the older generation ... the old people don't see the world of today, but the younger people, they have got ideas, and these ideas will enable them to change things in the world of today. (Male 10, 20 years)

While parents were not always regarded as competent social guides, there was still some evidence for the youth's commitment to maintaining some degree of continuity with their parents' values and lifestyles in formulating their social identities.

> If we can just combine the two together - the respect (of the older generation) and the civilization (of the modern days) then I am sure we will have a better generation in our future. (Male 7, 23 years)

The group memberships of church and decent citizenry tended overwhelmingly to reinforce family recipes for living in almost every respect. The groupings of gender and lovers often reinforced family recipes regarding relationships between men and women, although the influence of lovers on young women in particular was somewhat ambiguous.

For example, boyfriends tended to reinforce traditional family norms that a good woman should always give top priority to her home and family. For example, one young man said that his most important consideration in relation to his girlfriend was to see that their relationship did not interfere with the performance of her household duties and family obligations. He said that the emphasis she placed on these duties was one of her major attractions for him. Many young women stated that apart from going to school, and running errands for parents, they did not leave their family homes without asking their boyfriends' permission. To break this rule sometimes resulted in physical violence. Male informants echoed these prescriptions, emphasizing the importance of regulating their girlfriends' social interactions, and saying they would not tolerate their girlfriends going out without their permission. Young men also said they did not like their girlfriends to have "too many friends". Friends were seen as a bad influence, who might tempt an impressionable young woman to drink or to take up with more than one man.

However, young men were only interested in traditional family values insofar as they could enlist the family as an ally in controlling their girlfriends' movements. They exerted great pressure on their girlfriends to resist their families' restrictions on sexual behaviour. ("When a young woman does wrong, she does so for the sake of her boyfriend. Such behaviour will not be the things she has been taught at home." Female 7, 20 years.)

The extent to which the group membership of educated persons supported or contradicted family guidelines was also a complex matter. Despite their own lack of education, parents influenced their offspring in emphasizing the importance of education as a lifeline to save them from a life of poverty and personal struggle. The school solidly reinforced the family and the church's hierarchical, individualistic and conformist ethic. Scholars spoke of rigid rules and strict discipline, including routine corporal punishment of boys and girls of all age groups. Furthermore, several subjects used the analogy of "the school as family" in their accounts of how scholars should behave. ("Pupils should regard themselves as brothers and sisters, and take the teachers as their parents." Female 3, 19 years, scholar.) However, more radical informants pointed to education as the source of the intellectual tools and the widened horizons that inform much of their rejection of their parents' recipes for living as old-fashioned and inappropriate for modern life.

4. CONCLUSION

Firstly, how has the family's role in the socialization of youth been affected by conditions of rapid social change? It appears that the traditional role of the family in the socialization of township youth has indeed been affected by social and economic change. Growing levels of education, urbanization and politicization from their parents' generation to their own have resulted in a situation where many youth are more "street wise" than their parents, and regard certain of their parents' recipes for living as old-fashioned and inappropriate for the demands of modern life. Unemployment and poverty as well as the growing number of female-headed families appear also to have contributed to the transformation of traditional social relations in families.

Secondly, is the family's traditional influence on the world view and behaviour of its members being superseded by competing social influences? The final report will provide a detailed examination of the complex interaction of the influence of the family and memberships of groupings such as the comrades, the educated and friends in township youth's responses to the adaptive challenges presented to them by the changing social and material worlds.

Central to both these questions is what informants referred to as the "traditional" family notion of respect, defined in terms of (a) reverence for one's parents, (b) obedience to one's parents, and (c) acceptance of older people as valuable social guides. Interviews point to challenges to this notion by the youth, who often regard the recipes for living associated with competing social groupings as more adaptive than those associated with the family. However, there is also evidence that while the youth reject certain family recipes for living, they value certain others. Murray (1981) speaks of "the contradiction between the dissolution and conservation of traditional social relations" in his analysis of the effects of social change on African family life. This notion would seem to be particularly useful in relation to the present study's focus on the influence of the family on the youth. The final research report will consist of a more detailed examination of this contradiction in the context of an interest in the effects of rapid social change on family relationships and youth identity.

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VII The nature of parental authority in the family life of black South Africans

Sylvia Viljoen

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper forms part of a more comprehensive research project on the strengths and weaknesses in the family life of black South Africans. The research resulted from the workshops (1985) conducted under the auspices of the HSRC Co-operative Programme on Marriage and Family life. Participants were asked to focus in particular on research done in this area, as well as on essential research which still needed to be undertaken, in order to make research priorities in the field of marriage and family life more visible. Consequently it was decided that African family life should enjoy high priority.

In order to demarcate relevant research areas and to reach informed decisions on research strategies, individual as well as group discussions were conducted with academics from various disciplines and professionals from relevant helping professions. The said overarching theme flowed from this pilot or exploratory study. Furthermore, three areas were indicated as being the most relevant for an exploration into the strengths and weaknesses in the family life of Africans:

- parental authority;
- parenting styles; and
- values and norms regarding marriage and family life.

As the fieldwork progressed it was soon realized that these three areas were interrelated and should only be differentiated for the purposes of the study. This means that even though in terms of the topic of the paper one concentrates on parental authority, it interweaves with parenting styles and norms guiding family life. Transcriptions of discussions held with professionals from the helping professions, with parents, grandparents (who are parenting children other than their biological offspring), and young people speaking from their own experiences and viewpoints for their own future parenting, were scrutinized for data that had a "direct bearing" on the topic of the paper - parental authority. In the first instance an attempt is made to contextualize the data in terms of the way in which participants in the various groups give meaning to the concept of parental authority. Two of the "experiential contexts" that stand out in the transcriptions are the viewpoint of "families in transformation" and parental authority as "translated" particularly in the experience of the parent and grandparent group, as "respect" and "obedience". In order to "make sense" of the topic the presentation will follow the format advised by the data and will be discussed and illustrated with quotations from the transcripts.

In presenting the theme of parental authority as it crystallized from the data gathered it may be necessary to touch upon a few basic assumptions which I regard as being fundamental to this research, in order to further contextualize this presentation.

Although I have elsewhere[1] discussed the methodology of the research in more detail I shall situate the findings within the framework of the research design before discussing parental authority and factors relevant to parental control as they became clear from the research findings.

2. ASSUMPTION UNDERLYING THE RESEARCH

▷ Marriage and family life of black South Africans are in a transitional phase that may lead to insecurity and disintegration, but may also present opportunities for creative redefinition.

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[1] Working papers of seminar of programme held on Die Eiland in 1989.

- ▷ Myths, speculation and stereotypes regarding family life abound. These should be confronted with informed findings resulting from informed research.
- ▷ Research into the family life of Africans can never be done in an apolitical and ahistorical manner. In other words, research can never be done without considering the role of socio-political factors such as the processes of colonization, industrialization and urbanization, as well as the apartheid regime, in the disintegration of African family life.
- ▷ The diversity of individuals' perceptions and experiences of their own marriages and family lives is not always taken into account.

Against the background of these assumptions and the experiences gained from the two workshops as well as the other theoretical and methodological considerations, the choice of a qualitative research design seems almost "natural".

3. RESEARCH DESIGN

Without opening up the methodological controversies at the ontological and epistemological levels, I would nevertheless like to side with Hughes (1980:13) who says: "No technique or method of investigation (and this is as true of the natural sciences as it is of the social) is selfvalidating; its effectiveness, its very status as a research instrument making the world tractable to investigation, is dependent, ultimately, on philosophical justification." Here I am stressing that strategies cannot be divorced from underlying theoretical perspectives and that they are applied within a set of presuppositions about the nature of society and of humankind and of the relationship between the two. This means that research strategies cannot be viewed apart from the underlying theoretical points of departure. Theoretically speaking, my choice of qualitative research techniques is prescribed by my interest in how people understand, make sense of and describe their own life-worlds, construct their own social realities and determine the real "texture", and "feel" of family life and social and kinship networks.

On the other hand, the aims and nature of the research problem or area of concern also play a part in the choice of strategies. Within the social sciences, the social survey and questionnaire have become so well known as research techniques that one can almost refer to them as a traditional method of social research. But, as Walker (1985:3) states, in some circumstances "traditional" research methods are unsuitable. From the outset I realized that there was little existing research in this area that could be used as a basis for a sophisticated quantitative research design and also that the data relevant to the developed subfields, were too subtle and complex to be tailored to structured and/or standardized techniques. What is said about own "meaning giving", and own social construction of the realities of family life and kinship must be viewed against this background.

During the exploratory phase of the project the decision for a qualitative/descriptive study was furthermore "married" to a theme relevant to one of the conclusions of the said two workshops: "... that of the necessity of developing research programmes in such a way that **knowledge already gained could be applied** to the development of programmes and services for the prevention and management of the increase in family problems in the RSA, as well as the evaluation of the effectiveness of these programmes." (Emphasis that of the authors, Steyn *et al.*, 1987:932). This meant that apart from the people who are themselves part of families, professionals in the helping professions formed part of the target population in all the rural and urban areas where group discussions and workshops were conducted. The "parent group" as target group was extended to include the general phenomenon of grandparents who, for various reasons, "act as parents" in the upbringing of their grandchildren or the children of relations. Also, it was realized in the exploratory phase that the youth as future parents have experiences, and perceptions about families, that needed to be included. This meant that in the various rural and urban settings group discussions were held with professional people, as well as with parenting groups across three generations. In the workshop the same "pool" of respondents was invited to participate.

The research findings on parental authority in the family life of Africans, which will be discussed in the rest of the paper, come from the sources mentioned above.

As has been envisaged in the introduction the description, analyses and illustration of the data will be developed in terms of the contextualization regarding the concepts of respect and obedience, and be tied into a conclusion with possible repercussions for future research and policy considerations.

4 CONTEXTUALIZATION AND MEANING-GIVING REGARDING PARENTAL AUTHORITY IN AFRICAN FAMILIES

When it comes to the subheading of contextualization one is aware that in an "interdisciplinary conversation" different meanings can be attached to the essence of this concept. This necessitates an explanation as to the meaning given to contextualization in this study. Briefly, it boils down to the point of departure that, from a sociological perspective, contextualization as it is used here is more or less applied to a macro view of social reality.

In the statement of the underlying assumption of the research a macro contextualization emphasized the socio-political context of African family life in South Africa. In terms of many of the respondents' own meaning-giving regarding the strengths and weaknesses of African family life the decline of parental authority was viewed as one of the most important factors in the "disintegration" of families and it was furthermore largely situated in the context of social change and everchanging family life.

This one might even contextualize on a "meso level" in order to highlight the "faces and histories" of particular respondents — a reflection of the contexts in which social relations and interactions occur and which in-depth research can generate.[2] Such a spanning of the macro-micro level divide would, for instance, flow from a "happy marriage between sociology and anthropology".

In this research, and in the absence of such an enriched interdisciplinary relationship, contextualization is, however, viewed from a macro to a meso level without a sharp focus on the context of the lives of the various informants.

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[2] Comments from Dr Andrew Spiegel.

4.1 *CONTEXTUALIZATION AND MEANING-GIVING*

In terms of the meaning-giving of respondents it was found that in a number of group discussions, especially in those of professional people, the "family in transition" was referred to. In one such discussion a respondent tried to capture this notion by saying that parents come from a range of backgrounds and then have to "practise" parenthood in a radically different lifestyle (context). It would thus appear that parents in such a transitional phase feel handicapped and experience an inability to transmit "right and wrong" to their children. According to a respondent: "It makes for children growing up today without a clear understanding of what is right and wrong." In a similar "alien to tradition" parenting situation, parents may experience that their children fare better in adapting to a Westernized situation. Parents also experience the fact that, in this situation, children do not accept traditional parenting styles (or those of grandparents), and therefore question them — an attitude which parents call the "breakdown of parental authority."

4.2 *FAMILIES IN TRANSITION*

In a discussion which focused particularly on "the family in transition", respondents were encouraged to verbalize their own perceptions. From this it appeared that two "types" of transition phases are usually referred to, namely:

- a transition from a traditional to a Westernized lifestyle, and
- a transition from a rural to an industrialized/urbanized environment.

4.2.1 ***Transition from a traditional to a Western lifestyle***

Tradition no longer has power over people.
No tradition, but not a fully accepted Westernized way of life either.

In a traditional context, as discussed in depth in a number of group discussions (particularly with grandparent groups), older people (or the "older generation") were vested with much authority as "parents" by the younger generation. This was often reflected in the form of address used for all older people. Older people, should they see children misbehaving, are expected to punish or reprimand such children as if they were their own. In a Western context, according to the respondent, such behaviour would be seen by parents as unasked-for interference, and the case could even be taken to court. For this respondent the above example is representative of the breakdown of parental authority in a Western way of life where the traditional authority of the older generation has fallen away.

4.2.2 *Transition from rural to urban-industrial lifestyles*

> *It seems to me that parents from rural areas cannot cope in a more diversified urban life* (respondent from expert group in rural region).

In the discussions, this inability to cope was often linked to the vision (or is it nostalgia?) of an extended family in a rural community where other members of the household have specific, and often traditionally prescribed, roles to perform. In such a situation, parenthood is not carried out only by biological parents, but is shared by other members of the household. Furthermore, in the discussions extended family types were situated in rural or "traditional" communities in contrast to nuclear families which predominated in the urban areas. On the one hand, the more complex nature of urban-industrial life places increasing demands on parenthood; on the other hand, broader relations, and support networks as experienced in the rural areas, are lacking.

Within the context of "the family in transition", group discussions and workshops often refer to structural socio-political factors which had an obstructive and disintegrating effect on African families, the negative effects of which will linger on in the "new South Africa". In this context, the disruptive influence of the migrant worker system and the consequent absence of fathers surfaced countless times. In urban-industrial life it is not only the father who is forced to labour away from home, but the mother also has to work to ensure the survival of the family. Again, the support and ability of the members of the extended family to assume the role of authority, which is lacking because of parental absence, are missed. Reference was made time and again to the hours which parents spent commuting to and from work in public transport, as a direct result of the socio-political set-up of group areas. In one urban parent group the conclusion was drawn during a discussion that black mothers are often busy bringing up white children at the expense of caring for and socializing their own children. Furthermore, it is felt that first generation urban parents miss the assistance of other members of the household as experienced in the rural areas, but also, they do not have role models from their own rural past to fall back on. It is interesting to note that this positive view of assistance by members of the extended family was inverted by rural students in a group discussion. A student referred to the irritation he experiences when aunts and uncles are called in by his parents for advice on the resolutions of what, to him, is a minor transgression.

With regard to the view that African families are "families in transition", the following objection was raised at a group discussion held with experts on urban areas: "I feel transition is a very outdated term. How long is a transitional phase?" The respondent wanted to know about the second and third generation urban families who had never grown up in rural areas or within extended families. On the other hand, "... as far as blacks are concerned you cannot say we have nuclear families in the true sense like white families ..." Her perception of white nuclear families might be that they are strangers to the broader kinship system of traditional black families. In the final report of the research this was explored (contextualized) in terms of not only an age factor but also a socio-economic factor.

The discussion around changing families as "families in transition" was, as indicated, more often than not linked to what was experienced as the decline of parental authority. It leads to uncertainty regarding parenthood and an inability to transmit that which is seen as normative, which is further exacerbated by the decline of support by members of the extended household and of the security which prescribed and defined parent and child roles carry.

From the research results, however, it would appear that parental authority is seen as one, if not the only, pillar of parenthood and family stability. This is usually substantiated by referring to the fact that divorce and the decline of the family occur very seldom in traditional/rural communities where the authority of parents forms the guidelines of family relations.

In the discussions, parental authority often appeared as the more embracing and inclusive concept which is then explained on the basis of related concepts of which respect and obedience came up repeatedly.

4.3 *RESPECT FOR PARENTS AND OBEDIENCE OF CHILDREN*

As an integral part of the normative system, parental authority implies respect and obedience at a "prescribed" level. Children took it in with "mothers' milk" so that it became a "given" in terms of the family relations and social control.

The above-mentioned perception of respondents was tested in group discussions and it was usually concurred with. When parents are asked what they presently view as the one major problem experienced as parents, the answer follows spontaneously:

> *Children no longer have respect for parents.*
> *Children do not listen to older people and do just what they want.*
> *We cannot control our children anymore.*

It can be deduced from this that parents' perceptions of the decline of their children's respect are based on parents' own experience of the uncontrollability of children and this makes parenting difficult and sometimes even impossible.

In order to give more substance to a somewhat wide and vague concept, parent groups were asked to explain what they saw as an absence of respect for parents by children. It is in this context that the relation between respect and obedience is clearly reflected. Such discussions generally reverted back to the traditional/rural context in order to concretize it more in terms of the behaviour of children towards parents. Naturally, it could be speculated that in such a context "the good old times" are romanticized, but nonetheless it guided the discussion to what is experienced as the normative order in the consciousness of parents, as well as to what is actually transmitted during socialization.

Parents' perceptions of the disrespect of children are verbalized as follows:

> *Children do not listen to us.*
> *Children call parents by their first names as do whites.*

> *Children drop out of school.*
> *Children no longer greet parents or older people.*
> *I don't understand them, they stop at nothing.*
> *Respect means that children don't hold hands with their girlfriends or boyfriends in the presence of older people.*

When this facet of parental authority was focused on within the youth groups, it was found that young people agree that respect for parents is an important norm in "healthy" family life, but they differ with the "definition" of what constitutes respect and disrespect. To sum up, it could be said that children are very critical of the socialization practices of parental styles as can be seen from the following comments:

> *They say we must do "such and such", but then they don't do it themselves.*
> *Parents must gain respect from children by setting good examples and role models.*
> *Parents are often not involved or interested – they are just not there for us.*
> *Parents want to raise us as they were raised.*

Furthermore, it was mentioned that parents often do not encourage the under-achieving child and seldom express appreciation, but only punish. From the above-mentioned experiences children do not see parents as "earning" or "deserving" respect.

An analysis of responses with regard to respect thus appears to have both positive and negative nuances. These emphases are important and often surfaced in the youth groups when the question was raised as to what constituted the building blocks of respect for parents (and the reciprocal parental respect for children). Remarks made in this context emphasize, *inter alia,* the following aspects:

- Religion and ancestral worship play a role in the "building" of respect. The following remark by a young boy is particularly insightful: "Ancestors are part of the family and create a feeling of respect towards parents and elders."

- Respect for parents is created through extended family relations.
- Parents need to spend time with their children. Parents feel that they have no control over children if the children are left to their own devices all day without supervision. Children experience the absence of their parents as too little involvement.
- Overcrowding leads to a lack of privacy which was linked to intergenerational respect.

4.3.1 ***Respect and communication***

"Open" communication between children and parents creates respect — children want to be listened to and when they "talk back" it is not a sign of disrespect.

> *If parents do not give children the chance to express their viewpoints this may lead to insubordination.*
> *Parents should sit around the table and discuss things even when they are not used to doing it.*

Interesting group discussions focused on this aspect from the point of view of both parents and children. An analysis of responses indicates towards communication being seen in a different light traditionally, as compared with a Western view. Parents would give orders and it was not expected (lack of patience?) that children would ask questions or "talk back". Older people did, however, refer to the fact that when male youths returned with the livestock they were allowed to join the "older men's group", but again, it would appear, they joined more as listeners and receivers of orders and "lessons in life". In contrast, children attach a more "Western" or "liberal" meaning to communication — they would like parents to discuss and talk about concerns/issues.

The absence of communication, as defined by children, between fathers and children is specifically referred to. Children experience this as a lack of involvement, while parents and young fathers see it as part of the "distancing" which indicates respect. This means that children communicate with their fathers through their mothers. One mother expressed it in the following way:

"The reason why children don't communicate with the father is the respect they show to the father; hence they don't feel free to communicate with him."

To contextualize this it can be argued that one must view this phenomenon against the background of current socio-political life in South Africa. We cannot but acknowledge that the black youth have formed a very important pillar in the struggle for liberation or political rights. Parents experienced the operation of youth groups and student organizations, *inter alia,* in these terms: Their children and the thrust of youth organizations have become a force that threatens traditional, orderly family life. The moral authority of parents is no longer accepted or is at least questioned: "You have had your chance to destroy apartheid and you have done nothing!" and "Why is it that you tolerated the oppression of our people for generations?"

Still within the context of respect, another facet which came to the fore is the role of education.

4.3.2 *Respect and level of education*

It was particularly noted by grandparent groups that children often have no respect for parents and parental authority, because they (children) are more educated and they blame their parents for their illiteracy. From a group of experts came the statement that the so-called "generation gap" is, in some cases, more of an "education gap". It goes hand in hand with "open" communication and children's experience of their parents' credibility and of the "glorification of the traditional". Children also expressed a preference for discussing questions in peer groups, rather than approaching their parents.

Again positive and negative nuances were presented. It is positive in the sense that a narrower co-operation between school and family enhances respect for parents. On the other hand, parents experience ambivalence when struggling to provide their children with a school education only to find that the educated child has no respect for the uneducated parent. Also noted here by group members is socio-political consciousness — which is certainly relevant to the context of parental authority.

4.3.2 *Structural barriers*

The disintegrational effect of migrant labour was referred to in all discussions in one way or another. Although the applicable laws have been abolished, it is felt that the consequences of these laws will still be experienced for generations. It is linked to father absence, especially to the father role model, to the discipline in the family and to respect.

With regard to respect, in one group discussion it was strongly felt that alcohol abuse, crime and other "problems" which affect family life, are directly related to the frustration which stems from the institution of migrant labour.

Another facet which is experienced as a structural barrier arising from an unjust distribution of resources under apartheid is the phenomenon of poverty. The following comments stem from a group discussion:

> *Who can laugh when you are poor?*
> *Poor families cannot pay attention to children.*
> *Poverty is carried over to children.*

These comments, together with previous ones, indicate a clear relationship between poverty and the decline of parental authority.

Another contributory factor which is often mentioned is family housing. Overcrowding destroys respect because of a lack of privacy — children see parents clashing and this leads to a breakdown of respect as well as of quality of life.

The following are a few comments from the contributions of a father/grandfather during one of the workshops:

> *Looking back at our history:*
> *Home was the best thing —*
> *it all started from there —*
> *every child would be happy to go home —*
> *new laws move people —*
> *parents did not have money or time for well-constructed homes —*
>
> *no welcome*
> *no pride*
> *no privacy.*

5. CONCLUSION

It was previously mentioned that the three original areas of parental authority, of parenting styles and of family values and norms overlapped time and again — this became clear from the presentation. The facets which were addressed were more directly related to parental authority and could be managed within the allocated time.

With a view to future research and in view of possible policy implications the following issues are but a few that can be raised:

- Theoretical nuances of authority and power.
- Transition from ascribed to achieved status.
- To what degree would the same findings be true of other families in the diversity of South Africa?
- How useful are the findings in the development of family policy in the "new South Africa" as well as in the development of programmes to **strenghten** family lives?

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VIII Social class differences in age at first childbirth and views on the importance of children

A study of white women in Grahamstown

Susan C Ziehl

1. INTRODUCTION

Family sociologists are increasingly moving away from the use of the term "the family" and adopting the term "families". This semantic shift coincides with and emphasizes a change in analytical focus from the conventional nuclear family composed of a mother, a father and their biological offspring and characterized by the traditional sexual division of labour towards the analysis of a variety of behaviours affecting family life and a diversity of family forms. In other words, family sociologists are moving away from researching "the family" in favour of family diversity or diversity in families (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990). Such analyses take many forms. For example, Rapoport and Rapoport (1982) distinguish between families on the basis of organizational differences, cultural differences and differences in cohort, while Eversley and Bonnerjea (1982) discuss family diversity in terms of regional differences, ethnicity, class, women's economic activity and family life cycles. Zinn and Eitzen (1990), on the other hand, focus on the three bases of stratification (class, race and gender) when analyzing family diversity, while Rapp (1982) pays attention to the way material factors influence the flexibility of boundaries between families and society at large.

The aim of this paper is to illustrate the notion of family diversity within the South African context, drawing on data obtained from a study conducted in

1991 among white women in Grahamstown. In keeping with the theme of this symposium, only those behaviours and attitudes relating to children have been selected and, for the sake of simplicity, only variation in terms of social class is discussed. In short, this paper shows that among white Grahamstown women there are significant class differences in the timing of the birth of the first child on the one hand, and views on the importance of children on the other. It further offers some explanations for this phenomenon.

2. TRENDS IN AGE AT MARRIAGE AND FIRST CHILDBIRTH

One of the most significant aspects in family-related behaviour since the middle of this century is the trend towards later age at marriage. This has been noted in Britain and the United States as well as South Africa (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988:8; Zinn & Eitzen, 1990; Strijdom, 1987). In the case of the United States, the mean age of women at first marriage increased from 20,3 years in 1960 to 23,6 years in 1988 (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:268) and in Britain it increased by two years in the period between 1975 and 1985. In South Africa the increase has been less dramatic but the trend is the same: Between 1965 and 1984 the average age at first marriage rose from 21,9 to 22,1 years in the case of Asians, from 23,4 to 24,3 years in the case of coloureds and from 21,2 to 22,2 years in the case of whites (Strijdom, 1987:456).

A related trend is the trend towards later age at first childbirth. Again this has been noted in the United States and Britain (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:298; Elliot, 1986:88; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988:8). In the case of Britain, it rose from 24,7 years in 1975 to 26 years in 1985 (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988:8). Comparable statistics for South Africa do not appear to be available. However, assuming that the period between marriage and first childbirth has remained relatively constant (as has been the case in Britain), the existence of the same trend can be inferred from a consideration of the data pertaining to age at marriage.

There are difficulties involved in identifying and distinguishing between "cause" and "effect" when dealing with a number of related trends as we are here. It nevertheless seems reasonable to argue that the rise in the average age at marriage has been influenced by the increasing propensity among young unmarried couples to live together or cohabit prior to marriage. The latter has of course been facilitated by the spread of effective contraception which significantly reduces the chances of pregnancy and thereby one of the reasons for marriage. The trend towards cohabitation as a prelude to marriage also reduces the motivation to marry in order to gain access to a sexual partner (Spanier, 1989:258-259). A further contributing factor has been the rise of modern feminism.

By encouraging women to seek self-fulfilment in activities outside the home, modern feminism has promoted a rise in the proportion of women in tertiary educational institutions and in the paid labour force. The latter has been particularly pronounced in the case of married women. In Britain, for example, over one-half of married women were economically active in 1977 compared with just under 22% in 1951, and in South Africa women constituted about one-third of both the white labour force and the total labour force in 1980 compared with just over 20% in 1946 (Steyn *et al.*, 1989:204). Moreover, in 1980 more than 60% of white women workers in South Africa were married compared to just under 20% in 1946 (Steyn *et al.*, 1989:208). Therefore, in contrast to the past when the employment of women was seen as a phase between the completion of education and marriage, it appears that more and more women are remaining in the labour force after marriage. Furthermore, as women achieve higher levels of education, they gain greater access to highly skilled professional positions in the economy and their motivation to postpone childbearing until certain career goals have been reached, increases:

> In the 1950s people assumed that women would marry relatively early, in part to begin childbearing, and that most mothers would remain at home to raise the children. The impressive movement of women into the labour force during the intervening years has changed this picture. Women now possess a much greater propensity to have attended college in order to pursue a career or to have an interest in working during their early adult years. Consequently, they have a diminished desire to marry during their early twenties or to have children at a time when their careers are being launched (Spanier, 1989:259).

It seems, therefore, that women are increasingly regarding work as a "central life concern" and timing the birth of their children accordingly.

3. THE CASE OF WHITE GRAHAMSTOWN WOMEN

The study from which the data presented in the remaining part of this paper have been drawn, comprised a survey of 300 households and in-depth interviews with eight subjects (case studies). With a view to contextualizing the arguments raised further on, some of the general characteristics of the population covered by the survey are discussed below.

3.1 *SOME GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SAMPLED POPULATION*

Seventy one percent of those interviewed were married at the time of the study and 87% had children. The average number of children from first marriages was 2,46 and from second marriages 1,9. The average age at first marriage was 22,9 years in the case of women and 25,9 years in the case of men. Both of these figures are higher than the national average for white women and men at first marriage in 1984 and, as such, may be an indication that the trend towards later marriage among white South Africans has continued into the 1990s (Strijdom, 1987:455). On average, the women included in the study were 24,86 years old at the birth of their first child, 27,16 at the birth of the second and 29,33 at the birth of the third. On the basis of these data, it is possible to construct an ideal type of the domestic life cycle for white Grahamstown women. This is presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: IDEAL TYPE OF THE DOMESTIC LIFE CYCLE[1]

Household type	Age category
1. Nuclear family of origin	0 – 18
2. Single-person household	18 – 23
3. Couple household	23 – 25
4. Nuclear family of procreation	25 – 47
5. Couple household	47 – 68 *
6. Single-person household	68 – 76 **

* Life expectancy of white males (exact figure: 68,33)

** Life expectancy of white females (exact figure: 76,39)

(Source: Population Development Programme, 1989:69).

3.2 *VIEWS ON CHILDREN AND MARRIAGE*

The survey also questioned subjects on their views concerning the importance of children. Table 1 shows the responses to the question: "Do you regard children as an essential part (a) of your own marriage and (b) of marriages generally?" and shows that the majority regard children and marriage as integrally bound. The same idea was expressed by the women included in the case studies. Diane,[2] for example, responded as follows when asked about her reasons for having children:

> When I got married it was just the done thing. You got married and had children and I never questioned having children. I never thought of **not** having children. I thought it was automatic to have children.

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[1] All notes are at the end of the chapter.

TABLE 1: VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARRIAGE

Views	Number	Percentage
(a) For respondent:		
Agree	219	76,3
Disagree	68	23,7
TOTAL	287	100,0
(b) For others:		
Agree	155	56,2
Disagree	120	43,4
Depends	1	0,4
TOTAL	276	100,0

The fact that the average number of children from first marriages was just under three and the space between children was just over two years, suggests the widespread use of family planning mechanisms to limit and time the birth of children. In this regard, Belinda expressed one of the common responses to the question: "What influenced your decision to have a child?"

> I always knew that I wanted to have a family. It is something I always expected of a marriage. I anticipated it. I did take family planning. We waited until we were settled.

Up to this point we have considered the data generated by the survey in general terms. This, however, obscures some significant differences between women located at different points in the social hierarchy that were also revealed by the study.

3.3 SOCIAL CLASS AND TIMING OF FIRST CHILDBIRTH

Studies conducted in Britain and the United States have shown that lower-class women tend to marry at a younger age and have their first child earlier in life than other women (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990; Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988). In 1985, for example, upper-class women in Britain were four years older at first childbirth and waiting twice as long after marriage before having their first child than their lower-class counterparts (Humphrey & Humphrey, 1988:8). The same pattern was revealed by the Grahamstown study.

Cross-tabulation of the variable "class",[3] on the one hand, and age at marriage and at first childbirth, on the other, revealed that in both cases the relationship is statistically significant.[4] (See Table 2 in Appendix and Table 3 below.) Table 3 shows that only 2% of the women married to men in professional positions were younger than 21 years at the birth of their first child compared with 22% in the case of women falling in the manual category. Similarly, while nearly 80% of the total sample were between 20 and 31 years old at the birth of their first child, the proportion of "professionals" who fell into that age bracket was higher (89%) and the proportion of women in the "manual" category who fell into that age bracket was lower (74%) than that figure. Table 2 shows that the same pattern exists in respect of age at marriage.

TABLE 3: WOMEN'S AGE AT BIRTH OF FIRST CHILD BY OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY

Age	Professional %	Middle %	Manual %	Total %
Under 21	2,1	16,7	21,6	12,6
21 – 30	88,5	72,2	73,9	79,4
31 – 40	9,4	11,1	4,5	8,0
41 – 50	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
Over 50	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Pearson chi-square probability: 0,0009				

3.4 *SOCIAL CLASS AND VIEWS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CHILDREN*

The Grahamstown study also revealed significant class differences in views on the importance of children. (See Table 4 below and Table 5 in Appendix.) As indicated in these tables, the majority of the "professional" women did not regard children as an essential part of marriage nor as necessary for personal fulfilment, the opposite being true of women married to men in "manual" occupations.

TABLE 4: VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF MARRIAGE BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP

Group	Yes %	No %	Total %
Professional	39,4	59,6	100,0
Middle	51,7	48,3	100,0
Manual	77,7	22,3	100,0
TOTAL	56,2	43,4	100,0
Pearson chi-square probability: 0,000			

4. EXPLANATION

4.1 *THE TIMING OF CHILDBIRTH*

The most obvious factor linked to class differences in the timing of first childbirth is education. Since lower-class women are less likely to pursue a university education, the motivation to postpone childbearing until such studies have been completed will be less pronounced in their case than in the case of middle- and upper-class women. What is significant about tertiary educational achievements is not only the time spent obtaining them but their effect on the mind-set (or world-view) of women. More specifically, the higher the educational level of women, the greater the likelihood that they will embrace feminist ideals and eschew "motherhood" as a central life concern (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292). This can affect both the number of children a woman has and the timing of their births - highly educated women postponing childbearing in favour of pursuing a career.

The fact that middle- and upper-class women are more career oriented than their lower-class counterparts is not, however, a sufficient explanation for their greater tendency to delay childbearing since involvement in paid employment outside the home is by no means the prerogative of highly educated women.

To understand this pattern more fully we also need to consider the impact of childbearing on the lifestyles of women. As is argued below, the latter will differ depending on the ability of men to be sole breadwinners and is therefore related to the fact that the choice between "motherhood" and work is not equally available to all women.

The high level of remuneration and job security associated with the positions typically occupied by middle- and upper-class males means that families located at this end of the social scale are usually able to survive on one salary alone. Consequently, when middle- and upper-class women engage in paid employment outside the home, this tends to be the result of choice rather than necessity. A further implication of this is that, relative to lower-class women, upper and middle-class women have a greater ability to oscillate between employment and motherhood. It is this ability that creates the incentive to postpone childbearing until a career has been established or other work-related goals have been achieved. In other words, since middle- and upper-class women who desire to have children and pursue a career are faced with the option of confining the activities associated with these roles to discrete moments in their life cycle, the question of when to bear a child becomes a meaningful one and the motivation to postpone childbearing until one is ready to take on the role of mother and housekeeper is great.

Conversely, the material conditions faced by lower-class women are of such a nature that paid employment outside the home is a more or less regular feature of their lives. More specifically, the low level of remuneration and job security associated with the positions typically held by lower-class males means that the employment of wives (and in many cases children) is usually necessary for the material survival of lower-class families. This means that lower-class women are seldom faced with the choice between motherhood and work. Rather, what is more common in their case is the combination of these activities. Under these circumstances, the timing of childbirth has little impact on the life of the woman concerned and the question of "when is the right time to start having children" has little significance.

At this point a qualification is in order. It is clear that not all middle- and upper-class women forfeit employment to become mothers. Some remain in full-time employment while others move to part-time employment upon the birth of the first child. What is crucial to the argument raised above is the ability to exercise a choice in this regard. More specifically, because of the level of material well-being that their husbands can provide, middle- and upper-class women are able to choose between full-time and part-time motherhood whereas in the case of lower-class women this choice is seldom available. It is these differences that, in part, explain why, in contrast to lower-class women, middle- and upper-class women tend to postpone childbearing in the interest of pursuing work-related goals.

We can illustrate this point by contrasting the case histories of two of the women included in the Grahamstown study. The first is Petra who married upon completion of a degree in law. She was 24 years old at that time. She waited five years before having her first child and was 31 at the birth of the second. She now works part time as a lawyer and said the following when asked about the factors which affected the timing of the birth of her children:

> We always wanted children. We both love children. When we got married we decided that we were going to wait till after we had built our nest, after we had bought a house and I had worked for a while. I would have got frustrated if we had children earlier; I am a better mother for working. I have an ideal situation. I work in the morning for four hours. I fetch the children at school and then I am here with them the whole afternoon. I am lucky. There are few jobs that allow a woman such flexibility.

Cheryl, on the other hand, married at the age of 16. She bore the first of her four children at the age of 18 and the second at the age of 19. She now works full time at a ladies clothing store. She said this about her work:

> I don't want to work all the time (full time). I would like to be at home part of the time ... I love doing housework and looking after children. If I had a choice I would work part time. That would be ideal.

As can be noted from the above, both women describe part-time work as "ideal" yet only Petra is able to realize this ideal. Moreover, Petra's work was clearly a factor in the timing (and number) of the children she has borne. This was not the case with Cheryl who responded as follows when asked about the factors which influenced her decision to bear a child:

> In our case it just happened naturally. There was no family planning.

In this regard Humphrey and Humphrey (1988:5-7) draw attention to the influence of educational and occupational factors on the timing of first childbirth:

> The scrupulously planned two-child family has always been essentially a middle-class phenomenon. Even before the recent trend towards cohabitation as a prelude to marriage, well educated young women and (more especially) young men were typically two or three years older on their wedding day than their working-class contemporaries who had left school at the earliest possible age. And since fertility (like sexual activity) is at its peak in the late teens and early twenties, it calls for self-discipline as well as long-term goals to postpone parenthood during the years of emotional immaturity and financial insecurity ... Evidently it still requires a certain level of education and occupation to instil a due sense of priorities for living, in that parenthood can wait (up to a point anyway), whereas other significant aims relating to work or leisure activities may be compromised if children arrive too soon.

The postponement of parenthood in the case of middle- and upper-class women may also be a strategy on their part to cope in an organizational environment where childbearing is an impediment to career advancement:

> Even though the gender composition of the corporate work force has changed, the demands and structure of careers within these (corporate and professional) firms have remained relatively static. Thus, career women postpone childbearing until they have been promoted to higher ranks in their firms. There is little evidence that women who want to have children make it in the corporate world; those who have children prior to critical career promotions are often later denied these promotions. The heavy career investment these women must make early in their work lives leads to the postponement of children, and thus they do not combine working with childbearing in the early stages of their careers. Therefore, employers share responsibility for, yet are unresponsive to, the timing of the birth of children to the women they employ (Hertz, 1989:296).

4.2 *CHILDREN AND MARRIAGE*

A factor to consider when explaining class differences in views on the importance of children in marriage is the economic role of children in families.

Given the high value placed on education among those who have the means to support children until adulthood (and sometimes beyond it), children born into affluent families represent an economic liability and are valued primarily for the psychological gratification they provide adults. This was expressed by some of the women in the Grahamstown study. Belinda (a nurse married to a university professor), for example, said the following when asked about the advantages of having children:

> A wholeness - of the natural life cycle - and also companionship. I find them very companionable. I enjoy them.

And Petra said this in response to the same question:

> I don't know. It's just nice ...
> (and after a long pause)
> One can perhaps ... no you can't ...
> relive your youth through them.
> They give you a different perspective on life.

In lower-class families, by contrast, children are more likely to be economic assets rather than liabilities. This is so because of the greater need for children to contribute to the family income and the concomitant lower value placed on education. In other words, among families with limited means, children perform an economic role either through employment in the paid labour force or through rendering services such as baby-sitting, shopping and the like. Children also represent a source of security in old age. This was emphasized by one of the subjects in the Grahamstown study, Ellen, who said this about her reasons for having children:

> Family is very important to me. I wanted something of my own and stability and security and all the rest. The second one was a mistake because the marriage was starting to go wrong. And everyone else was having babies.

In short, as ironic as it might sound, the lower the socio-economic position of women, the greater the material (economic) benefits associated with having children (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292). This may be one of the reasons why poorer women are more inclined to view children as an essential part of marriage than their more affluent counterparts. This argument may also explain why lower-class women bear their first child earlier in life than others.

4.3 *CHILDREN AND SELF-FULFILMENT*

Class differences in views on the necessity of children for self-fulfilment may be related to the differential rewards associated with occupations typically held by women located at different points in the class system.

Given their higher level of education, middle- and upper-class women tend to be employed in positions requiring a high level of skill and responsibility. It is these positions that are most likely to be experienced as rewarding and, as such, can compete with children as a source of personal fulfilment. This is in contrast to the situation of lower-class women. For the latter, work is usually a mundane but necessary experience and, as such, holds little attraction as a substitute for having children. Consequently, since the chances of obtaining a sense of personal worth and self-fulfilment through work activities are limited in the case of lower-class women, they are more inclined to see children as a source of personal fulfilment. In this regard, Humphrey and Humphrey (1988:9) quote a 36 year old television presenter:

> I do want to have children eventually ... I have been thinking about it more and more lately. But if I'm going to be a mother I'll give everything to that as long as it takes. The thing that fulfils me now is my career, and for the moment that's what I'm going to put first.

By contrast, one of the subjects in the Grahamstown study said the following when asked about the disadvantages of having children:

> No (I don't think there are any), it depends on your priorities. A lot of people put careers first. For me the career did not come first. I wasn't ambitious. I wasn't an academic. I wasn't very clever at anything so I was happy to be myself and be a mother.

Furthermore, because of the low social status associated with the work usually performed by those located at the bottom of the social scale, becoming a parent represents one of the few means of attaining social standing in the community. It is therefore possible that one of the reasons why lower-class women have children is to improve their social status and, by extension, their own sense of personal worth. While this motivation to have children tends to be more pronounced in the case of lower-class males than lower-class females, it may explain why the latter are more inclined to see children as a source of self-fulfilment than other women:

> Those with the least amount of education are most likely to hold traditional beliefs, including the acceptance of traditional sex roles and pronatalism (the high value given to childbearing) ... Being a parent is proof of adulthood and a source of status and identity. Being a parent, especially for a lower-class male, can provide a source of pride and an opportunity for power not otherwise available (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:292).

4.4 THE "OPPORTUNITY COSTS" OF HAVING CHILDREN

The nature of the positions occupied by lower-class women in the economy can also explain why they tend to have their first child earlier in life than other women. The argument raised here revolves around what economists refer to as "opportunity costs", that is, that which must be forfeited in order to obtain something else - in this case, the "opportunity costs" of having and raising children.

Apart from providing the incumbent with a sense of self-fulfilment, the occupations of middle- and upper-class women usually carry greater economic rewards when compared with those typically occupied by lower-class women. Therefore, for those women who choose to forfeit work in the interests of becoming full-time mothers and housekeepers, the "opportunity costs" associated with having children will be high and the motivation to postpone the decision to have a child will be great. In other words, the higher the economic and other rewards deriving from employment outside the home, the more difficult the decision to forfeit such employment in the interests of bearing a child.

Again we are dealing here with a somewhat ironic situation since those very women who have the greater ability to forfeit work in order to become full-time mothers - because of the occupations of their husbands - are least likely to do so, because of the great economic and personal rewards associated with their own positions in the economy. This may explain why the trend towards voluntary childlessness is more pronounced in the case of highly educated women (Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:298). The point being made here, however, is that the high rewards associated with the positions typically held by middle- and upper-class women tend to positively influence the decision to postpone parenthood and may explain why middle- and upper-class women are, on average, older than their lower-class counterparts when they have their first child.

Petra emphasized the dilemma many career women face given the high "opportunity costs" of their withdrawal from the labour force. In her case the withdrawal was only partial but the dilemma is the same. The inner conflict that she was experiencing between her desire to work on the one hand and her desire to be a "good mother" on the other, found manifestation in the fact that she became visibly tearful in the course of the interview:

> Respondent: When my second daughter was two months old, I stayed at home and became so depressed. It got so bad that one day my husband came up to me and put the car keys in my hand and said: "Here, go and get yourself a job." I don't know if it is because I chose this particular profession. When I'm at home I know what I am missing, things develop so quickly. It is easy to get behind. One always has this guilt feeling towards one's work. So, for me working part time works out well; I would not start working full time until my children have finished school. I think children need a mother (at home). People are inclined to say children need a mother at home when they are young. But I think children's needs grow larger the older they get. I think our situation is good. There are lawyers who ask me to come and work full time. But I always say: I have made this decision ... I just can't ... They don't understand. I think they see me as old-fashioned. But I am going to hold on for a little longer.
>
> Interviewer: Till the children have finished school?
>
> Respondent: No, maybe I'm being a little idealistic, I'll see. But that is my plan.

In summary, although the spread of effective contraception, the rise of modern feminism and other factors have resulted in women of all social classes having their first child later in life, these factors have not led to a standardization or equalization of age at first childbirth - lower-class women in South Africa, as in Britain and the USA, continue to bear their first child at a younger age than others. Moreover, as revealed by the Grahamstown study, lower-class women attach greater value to children than other women and, as has been argued above, the explanation for this pattern can be found in the differential rewards associated with the occupations of men and women located at different points in the social hierarchy.

5. CONCLUSION

In this paper the focus has been exclusively on variation in reproductive behaviour and attitudes towards children as they relate to differences between social classes. The intention has not been to create the impression that other variables are of no or little significance. In the Grahamstown study, the variable "culture" as measured by the mother tongue of respondents was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with the attitudes and behaviours discussed in this paper.[6] The intention has, however, not been to come to any conclusion on the relative strength of "class", "culture" or any other variables in explaining family diversity. Rather, the idea has been to illustrate and offer some explanations for the way families located at different points in the social hierarchy differ from one another.

The influence of material conditions on behaviour and ideas relating to family life is something analysts of family life should not ignore.

Notes

1. In constructing the ideal type, figures have been rounded and two assumptions have been made:

   i that children leave the parental home at the age of 18, and
   ii that marriages remain intact.

2. All of the names used to refer to subjects included in the study are ficticious.

3. Occupation was used as an indicator of social class. Schlemmer and Stopforth's manual for the coding of occupations in South Africa (1979) was used to classify individuals and households according to social class. The following categories were used:

   i Professional and managerial occupations
   ii Middle white-collar occupations
   iii Manual foreman and skilled occupations
   iv Routine non-manual and semi-skilled manual
   v Unskilled manual and menial
   vi Farmer
   vii Armed forces (excluding police)

viii Housewife
ix Student

These categories were re-organized to create three broad categories:

i Professional:
This category includes those in professional and managerial occupations as well as students.

ii Middle:
This category includes those in middle white-collar occupations, farmers and employees of the armed forces.

iii Manual:
Manual foremen and skilled occupations, routine non-manual and semi-skilled manual, unskilled manual and menial were combined under this heading.

Housewives were left out of reckoning in the compilation of these three categories.

Both the respondent and, where applicable, her husband or boyfriend's occupations were asked. However, for the sake of expediency, only husbands' and boyfriends' occupations were used for analytical purposes, that is, to identify the class position of households and women. While this procedure may be accused of a "gender bias", it is justified by the fact that cross tabulation of the occupations of respondents and those of their husbands or boyfriends indicated that the probability that these variables are **not** related is nil (see Note 4).

Moreover, the same pattern has been identified by researchers elsewhere. A study conducted in the United States, for example, revealed that in 99,998% of cases an individual marries within his or her social class (Rubin (1968) quoted by Zinn & Eitzen, 1990:228) (see also Steyn *et al*., 1989:160).

4. A Pearson chi-square test indicates the probability that the two variables in a cross-tabulation procedure are **not** related. In cases where the Pearson chi-square probability is smaller than 0,05 it can be assumed that the variables in question are indeed related in a statistically significant way.

5. The arguments raised in this paper concerning class differences in the timing of childbirth apply equally to class differences in the number of children. However, since it has not been possible to illustrate the latter using data from the Grahamstown study, it is not discussed in any detail.

6. The variable "culture" was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with age at first childbirth (probability 0,0038), such as views on the importance of children in marriage (probability 0,0005) and on whether children are necessary for personal fulfilment (probability 0,0009). More specifically, Afrikaans-speaking women were, on average, younger than English-speaking women at the birth of their first child and were also far

more likely to regard children as an essential part of marriage and necessary for personal fulfilment than their English-speaking counterparts. This is partly due to the fact that Afrikaans-speakers tended to dominate in the lower socio-economic categories, the opposite being true of English-speakers. In other words, the study revealed a strong relationship between the variables "class" and "culture" (probability of 0,0035) and this may explain why "culture" was also found to have a statistically significant relationship with the issues discussed in this paper.

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Appendix

TABLE 2: WOMEN'S AGE AT MARRIAGE BY OCCUPATION

Age	Professional %	Middle %	Manual %	Total %
Under 21	16,0	25,0	40,4	27,0
21 – 30	84,0	71,4	53,2	69,9
31 – 40	0,0	1,8	5,3	2,3
41 – 50	0,0	1,8	0,0	0,4
51 – 60	0,0	0,0	1,1	0,4
Over 60	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
TOTAL	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Pearson chi-square probability: 0,0003				

TABLE 5: VIEWS ON WHETHER CHILDREN ARE NECESSARY FOR PERSONAL FULFILMENT BY OCCUPATION

Group	Yes %	No %	Total %
Professional	48,6	51,4	100,0
Middle	59,6	40,4	100,0
Manual	70,8	29,2	100,0
TOTAL	59,3	40,7	100,0
Pearson chi-square probability: 0,0058			

IX The development and evaluation of a situation-specific parent-training programme

AS de Vos

1. INTRODUCTION

Developmental research: A model for interventional innovation

The above wording is the title of a chapter by Edwin J. Thomas in the well-known source book by Richard M. Grinnell: *Social work research and evaluation* (1981). This is one of the places where this author (who is not the only one by any means, e.g. *cf.* Rothman, 1980) presents the concept of developmental research in the human professions, as distinct from the more usual basic or applied approaches in the human sciences. Thomas states that, traditionally, research in social work has been directed primarily to what has come to be known as **knowledge development**. It draws its methods largely from the behavioural sciences and uses them to examine research questions relevant to social work and social welfare. **Developmental research**, in contrast, is very different and is not well known. It is directed towards the development of a **social technology**, the latter term being defined as all the technical means by which social work objectives are achieved. Without such technical wherewithal, Thomas argues, social work could not achieve its goals. Of these technologies there are at least nine general types, viz. physical frameworks, electromechanical devices, information systems, assessment methods, intervention methods, service programmes, organizational structures and service systems. Each of these categories houses a plethora of possibilities.

Basically the Thomas model, which he calls **developmental research and utilization (DR & U)**, is a phase model, consisting of the basic two phases of development and utilization. The developmental phase is again divided into three subphases of analysis, development and evaluation, and the utilization phase into the subphases of diffusion and adoption. Thomas conceptualizes ten "material conditions" as preconditions for the implementation of each subphase, which again is operationalized in 15 specific steps the researcher is to follow.

The concept of developmental research is not new in the human sciences, and has been incorporated into the thinking of the Human Sciences Research Council since earlier days (consult certain application forms). However, this approach has usually been associated with the more obviously practical sciences and technologies such as is found in the fields of industrial engineering, medicine and all other fields dealing with applied and practical matters. However, its place in social work research is at this stage - a decade since the Thomas model became well known by means of the Grinnell source book - well established in the minds of most social work researchers.

This, then, is the model utilized in this researcher's attempt to develop and evaluate a situation-specific parent-training programme.

2. THE CONCEPT OF PROGRAMME EVALUATION

In 1982 Rossi and Freeman stated that the purpose of evaluation research, or programme evaluation, is to assess and improve the conceptualization, design, planning, administration, implementation, effectiveness, efficiency, and utility of social interventions and human service programmes. Towards that end, programme evaluation systematically applies many research designs and methods - experiments, surveys, participant observation, and so forth.

In the third edition of their book (1985), Rossi and Freeman are more concise, but the definition has probably lost in richness. They state: "Evaluation research is the systematic application of social research procedures in assessing the conceptualization and design, implementation, and utility of social intervention programs" (1985:19). This definition is repeated in their latest (fourth) edition (1989:18), adding the following explication: "In other words, evaluation researchers (evaluators) use social research methodologies to judge and improve the ways in which human services policies and programs are conducted, from the earliest stages of defining and designing programs through their development and implementation" (*ibid.*).

Based on the Rossi and Freeman statements, the following definition or description of programme evaluation is proposed for the purposes of this paper: Programme evaluation is the systematic application of social research procedures in assessing and improving the conceptualization, design, planning, administration, implementation, utility and utilization of social interventions and human service programmes. These interventions and programmes can be broad, open systems of services offered on a macro or meso level, or standardized packages designed for the purpose of the enrichment of; or prevention of problems in vulnerable areas of; or rehabilitation in already problematic areas in, the social functioning of various client systems. Towards these ends, programme evaluation systematically applies many research designs and methods.

Two further considerations are relevant to an understanding of programme evaluation:

- As implied in the first statement of the definition, a wide variety of types of programme evaluation exists, such as needs assessment, evaluability assessment, programme monitoring, impact assessment, cost analysis and/or cost effectiveness evaluation (utility evaluation) and utilization research (Kaplan, 1980; Rossi & Freeman, 1989; Hornick & Burrows, 1988; De Vos, 1989).
- Implementation of as large a selection from all these types of evaluation as is possible in any specific situation will produce more valid and reliable results than implementation of only one type of evaluation.

A still closer analysis of the above types of evaluation leads to the discovery that each type roughly coincides with the phases of any well-designed programme evaluation effort. Types could, therefore, be transformed into phases without undue academic guilt feelings (*cf.* Kaplan, 1980, who proposes the same transformation without batting an eyelid). Within each phase, however, a specific procedure is followed, which can be identified as the **process** of programme evaluation, variously conceived and defined (*cf.* Raymond, 1981; McKendrick, 1989). The process is always described in terms of specific steps to be followed. However, a very flexible implementation of these steps is required in each phase of a total evaluation effort.

Subsequently this researcher synthesized all these considerations into what is called an **integrated model of programme evaluation (IMPE)** which has been effectively used by some post-graduate students by the simple exigency of extracting those phases from the broad spectrum of possibilities, and within each phase again extracting those steps of the programme evaluation process most relevant to the specific situation under study (*cf.* Bredenkamp, 1990; Buitendach, 1990; also others still in the process of completion).

3. A SITUATION-SPECIFIC PARENT-TRAINING PROGRAMME

The next question that needs to be addressed, is what is meant by a situation-specific parent-training programme in this context. The answer to this question is closely related to an aspect of the South African situation. It is also related to a philosophic stance which needs explication.

The South African situation, in its varied and often tragic dimensions, is characterized by a fact that has often been quoted in various contexts (e.g. De Coning, Fick & Coetzee, 1989), viz. that at least 77% of the whole South African population views itself as belonging to some or other denomination of the Christian religion. The exact meaning of this statement varies considerably, and in 1980 included 19,9% of so-called indigenous sects. The other 23% belonged — as reported in 1980 — to the Jewish (0,4%), Hindu (1,7%), Islam (1,1%) or "other" (1,8%) religions, or they had no religion, had objected to the question or were "not sure" (18%) (De Coning, Fick & Coetzee, 1989:27).

The researcher has been engaging in research on parent training since 1981 (De Vos, 1986; 1989) and, as has been reported in the relevant articles, dealt with about 250 parents over a period of about five years. During that time the attendance and interest of Afrikaans-speaking parents waned visibly and measurably. Some of the parents expressed discomfort with the basic philosophy of the parent-training programme offered (the so-called **systematic training for effective parenting (STEP)**, *cf.* Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1976). The parents increasingly began to question the basic assumptions of the programme and wondered whether an indigenous programme suitable for the Afrikaans-speaking parent could not be developed. This need began to be expressed by social workers, teachers, trainers of teachers, nurses and others (De Vos, 1989).

The content of the difference in basic approach between the existing imported programmes such as STEP, PET and QUEST, and what was seen as the needs of the Afrikaans-speaking population, is a humanistic versus a "Calvinistic" stance. What this basically means, can perhaps best be illustrated by a table compiled by Senekal (1989).

In summary, it can be stated that the situation-specific context of this research is the value system of the Protestant Christian ethic as opposed to the purely humanistic value system. In some ways the differences between these value systems are semantic; in other ways the differences are deep-seated, emotionally laden and deeply significant for those parents who hold these values.

4. BACKGROUND OF THIS RESEARCH

The history of this research project has been described elsewhere (De Vos, 1986, 1989) and will be summarized very briefly here.

On the basis of evaluations of the effects of the STEP programme on those parents who attended the programme from 1981 onwards and who could be located in 1985, perhaps the most important finding was that **most parents reported that they still found that they were more influenced by their own parents' parenting style than by the STEP programme**. Yet just over 47% reported **some** influence from the STEP programme. Combining these two findings the researcher interpreted attempts at parent training as still meaningful - especially in view of the supportive findings of other researchers (Fine: *The second handbook of parent education*, 1989). Although no distinction was made during the preliminary studies between Afrikaans- and English-speaking parents - except for the known fact that many more English- than Afrikaans-speaking parents have actually attended the programme - the need for an indigenous programme especially geared to the needs of the very religiously-oriented Afrikaans-speaking parent forced itself on the researcher.

At this point (1987) the Human Sciences Research Council launched a programme to enhance the implementation and utilization of research results called the HSRC/SAC (Scientific Advisory Council) Project. The researcher registered her research with this project, and attended a two-day seminar on research utilization in April 1987. One of the pieces of advice given to the researchers present was that the researchers were to attempt to involve representatives of the target groups they were planning to reach at an early stage, preferably right at the beginning of the planning stage of the research. Chances that the results would be utilized when they became available are greatly increased by such involvement.

The researcher duly identified two target groups in this case: the parents themselves, as well as all professionals and semi-professionals who are involved with parents in their parenting role, that is, child-care workers, teachers at all levels, trainers of teachers, social workers, psychologists, nurses and other medics, etc. Using the snowball technique, the researcher located 51 representatives of both groups in October 1987, divided them into six small groups of eight or nine persons each, and met with them over a three-week period three times a week in order to obtain their inputs in respect of the basic philosophy of the envisaged programme, as well as its content. This exercise proved to be an invaluable needs assessment opportunity. Moreover, the overwhelming response from the 51 people present reflected a need for the situation-specific parent-training programme as defined above.

Subsequently the 51 representatives - who were conveniently called the development group - elected six people to write the first draft of a new programme. This group met weekly during 1988, and in September 1988 delivered the result of their efforts: a programme called **POLS** (**praktiese ouerleiding seminaar,** or, freely translated, **practical parent guidance seminar**). Most members of the original six development groups were contacted and 25 enrolled for training in the new programme. This number subsequently decreased to 12 trained group leaders. Training progressed through the first half of 1989, and in the latter half attempts were made to invite parents to attend a first attempt at implementation. The geographical area immediately surrounding the Rand Afrikaans University was selected as possibly the most convenient for both parents and group leaders. Attractive pamphlets were designed and distributed to about 1 500 parents in the vicinity *via* the nursery, primary and secondary schools in the area.

The results of this effort were most disappointing. Nine parents indicated interest, and of these only eight turned up at the first meeting. Two of these subsequently withdrew, so that only six continued with the programme. The rest of the parents (12 in number) who were contacted *via* the schools, hailed from the higher SES northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The group finally comprised 18 parents.

At the same time - the latter half of 1989 - a group of third-year social work students were also trained in the POLS programme, and offered it to groups of parents as part of their practical training in social work. These parents were located through various churches, and the numbers of interested parents (61) far outweighed those located through the schools.

5. THE SAMPLE

The sample of 79 parents who were eventually involved in the pilot study of the programme during the period 31 July to 24 October 1989 thus consisted of 18 parents located through the schools and 61 through the churches. Due to a misunderstanding, six of the 18 parents located through schools did not complete the post-test. Of the group located through churches 26 did not complete post-tests or dropped out of the programme. Consequently full data were available for only 46 of the original 79 parents - that is, 58%.

6. THE EVALUATION STRATEGY

Two forms of evaluation were implemented, viz. a process evaluation and an impact evaluation. The process evaluation was executed by means of an evaluation form which parents were requested to complete at the end of EACH session, or at the end of the weekend, if the programme was offered over a weekend (*cf.* Appendix A). The impact evaluation consisted of a pre- and post-test to be completed by parents, utilizing an Afrikaans translation of the Hudson Index of Parental Attitudes (IPA, 1981, Appendix B), and of the Hudson Index of Family Relations (IFR, 1981, Appendix C). Basically this means that the process evaluation gathered data of a more qualitative nature, and the impact evaluation gathered quantitative data.

Both Hudson indexes consist of 25 items. The indexes have been well researched in the USA and were standardized and construct-validated (Hudson, 1981). The indexes are scored to have a range from 0 to 100, with lower scores always indicating less serious problems and higher scores a higher degree or greater magnitude of the problem being measured. Each scale has a clinical cutting-off point at 30; that is, respondents who score above 30 are generally found to have a clinically significant problem in the area being measured, and those who score below that point are generally found to be free of such problems (Hudson, 1981:153).

In each of the scales some items are positively worded and others are negatively worded. Before scoring one of these scales, therefore, it is necessary to first "reverse-score" all the positively worded items. After all appropriate items have been reversely scored, the total score for a respondent is computed as follows:

$$TS = X - 25$$

where TS is the total score for a respondent and X the sum of all item scores after reversal.

On the IPA (Index of Parental Attitudes) a statistically significant difference was found on the 0,01% level of significance between the pre- and the post-tests* of the sample of 46 parents who eventually completed both pre- and post-tests - the null hypothesis could therefore not be accepted. However, on the IFR (Index of Family Relations) no significant difference was found between the pre- and post-tests of the relevant respondents. The null hypothesis could therefore not be rejected in this case.

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* The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test (Siegel & Castellan, 1988) was utilized for this purpose.

7. BRIEF DISCUSSION OF IMPACT EVALUATION

The researcher considers the above finding highly significant, in view of the fact that the sample was widely spread over a large geographical area, that a wide variety of group leaders, including rather inexperienced third-year students, implemented the programme, and that respondents from a wide variety of situations - lower middle to upper middle class - attended the course.

Another significant finding was that the IPA duly reflected a significant difference between pre- and post-tests, while the IFR could not pick up any such difference. The researcher is of the opinion that this is a valid reflection of the content of the programme: The programme addresses the attitude of parents toward their children, and not general family relations. This latter measure will therefore not be utilized for the next phase of the research.

8. THE PROCESS EVALUATION

According to the Integrated Model of Programme Evaluation, programme monitoring would include both an input and a process evaluation. No special effort was made to compute an input evaluation, except to note that 12 third-year students were involved with 61 parents. As four of the students formed two two-person teams, a better statement would be that ten student systems were involved with ten groups of parents, averaging six parents per group. Two senior lecturers - one from Sociology and one from Social Work - handled 18 parents between them - one group consisting of 12, and the other of six parents. Most group leaders covered the eight session programme within six sessions, making various combinations of the contents, which complicated processing of the data a little, as will be indicated below.

Appendix A indicates that the process evaluation form was quite simple to complete even for the least educated parents. For the purposes of this paper only one quantitative dimension was computed, viz. the one dealing with the **usefulness** of the content of each session. In addition 10% of the statements relating to exactly what "snippets of information the parents found most useful" were randomly drawn as samples, as well as 5% of the statements under "additional comments" by parents.

The rationale behind the choices made is that motivating parents to select small snippets of information was thought not only to emphasize these bits of information in the parents' minds, but also to induce them to make a selection of what they considered truly useful. These could then be important indicators of parental needs, to be used by the research team for the development of the final programme.

9. EVALUATION FORMS RECEIVED

A total of 297 evaluation forms were received, of which 244 or 82% could be used. Forty five forms were discarded because they dealt with those situations where group leaders made their own combinations of the contents. Only forms completed in groups which dealt with "pure" chapters were used for this analysis. Doubtlessly, interesting conclusions can be drawn about the effectiveness of various combinations of contents, but that is not considered relevant here. Eight forms were discarded because of erroneous completion.

However, one combination was used for the analysis, viz. that of the last two chapters, as the conclusive chapter was very brief.

The following tables summarize the results received:

TABLE 1: PROCESS EVALUATION FORMS RECEIVED

SESSIONS	RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE*
1	57	72
2	37	47
3	33	42
4	25	32
5	36	46
6	20	25
7/8	36	46
TOTAL ATTENDANCE	244	AVERAGE 44

* The calculation of percentages is based upon a total of 79 parents who participated in the programme and who returned forms in respect of each session. Assuming that completion of forms constitutes attendance, attendance was on average 44% (of parents) per session. It should, however, be borne in mind that the figure is distorted by the number of forms which had to be discarded due to the arbitrary combination of sessions made by certain group leaders, and other factors described above.

From these results the researcher has learnt that special attention has to be paid to the diligent completion of whatever measuring instruments are to be used. The relatively low rate of 58% of respondents who completed both pre- and post-tests for the impact evaluation, causes similar concern, pointing to the need for close supervision of a research project when a relatively large group of fieldworkers are involved at ground level.

In Table 2 the ratings given by parents to the usefulness of each session, as perceived by themselves, are summarized.

TABLE 2: EVALUATION OF USEFULNESS OF CONTENTS OF EACH SESSION ON 5-POINT SCALE

SESSION	LESS THAN 3	3	4*	5**	TOTAL
1	2	9	22	24	57
2	–	3	16	18	37
3	–	3	20	10	33
4	–	2	13	10	25
5	–	2	23	11	36
6	–	1	7	12	20
7/8	–	1	17	18	36
TOTALS	2	21	118	103	244
%	0,8	8,6	48,4	42,2	100

* 4 = Very useful

** 5 = Exceptionally useful

The very positive response of parents is clearly reflected in the above table. Over 90% felt that the contents of each session was either "very useful" (4) or "exceptionally useful" (5).

Subsequently a 10 % random sample was drawn of statements by parents on the pieces of information they saw as exceptionally useful. These statements were sometimes difficult to interpret, in view of the fact that some parents only had a basic education and were not always able to express themselves clearly. The researcher experienced frustration when some of the very interesting statements made by parents who escaped random sampling had to be ignored. The question inevitably arose in her mind: When is random sampling **really** essential? Would a biased picture of the reactions of the more intelligent respondents not have given us a better picture? Those statements that **were** drawn, are listed (freely translated) in Appendix D.

Very few parents used the opportunity to make additional comments, but these are viewed as exceptionally important. A 5% random sample of these comments was therefore drawn (*cf.* Appendix E).

10. THE FINAL PROGRAMME

In spite of the favourable outcome - on the face of things - according to the evaluation of the POLS programme, half of the original six authors scrutinized the contents of the programme very closely, especially its philosophical or ideological foundation. They were dissatisfied with a philosophical basis which was still not what was originally intended.

Consequently they decided to consider the POLS as a forerunner, and the evaluation executed thus far as the pilot study, and started to reconceptualize the programme afresh in 1990. This has put them back about two years, but they feel the product they are working on now is well worth the effort.

A convocation of Reformed Churches approached the researchers, requesting that they test-run the new programme in their church. This was planned for the weekend 13-15 September 1991, and about 60 parents were targeted. A grand finale was planned on Sunday morning, when the panel of authors, who would also be the presenters of the programme, would meet with an enlarged audience from the various congregations after the early morning church service. This would also be an important marketing opportunity, and the beginning of further testing and refinement of the programme.

11. IN CONCLUSION

This project has often been perceived by the team of researchers to have become a very prolonged process. For the project leader it spans a full decade, having commenced in 1981 in her home, when the first parents attended the first presentation of the STEP programme. However, it has been an exciting journey, and one she would not have chosen to miss.

The main lessons she has learnt from this project thus far can roughly be listed as follows:

- ▷ Be very careful about whom one involves in one's research project; not all people may be single-minded researchers, as some may see tempting business opportunities where only a research project was intended.
- ▷ Measuring instruments should be selected very carefully indeed, so that only those dependent variables that the researcher wants to measure, are measured. This sounds rather like a well-worn cliché, and yet a researcher can easily fall into the trap of wanting to use this handy instrument, recently discovered, and having a golden opportunity, decides to add it to the others!
- ▷ When a group of researchers is involved, careful monitoring of the administrative and research processes is essential. One cannot assume that the rest of the team is as committed as the project leader. Hands-on management is as indispensable here as elsewhere.

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Appendix A

EVALUATION FORM FOR GROUP MEMBERS

Name of programme:

Commencement date:

Group leader:

Closing date:

Session number:

Date of session:

Objective of session (title of chapter):

Was the information in this session useful?

1	2	3	4	5
a little useful	fairly useful	rather useful	very useful	exceptionally useful

Which little bit (snippet) of information do you consider most useful of all?

How effective was the group leader during this session?

Which action(s) of the group/other group members did you find most effective during this session?

Please evaluate your satisfaction with today's group meeting

1	2	3	4	5
very dissatisfied	dissatisfied	neutral	satisfied	very satisfied

Additional comments you may wish to make:

Appendix B

INDEX OF PARENTAL ATTITUDES

PARENT'S NAME: .... TODAY'S DATE: ....

CHILD'S NAME: ....

This questionnaire is designed to measure the degree of contentment you have in your relationship with your child. It is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Answer each item as carefully and accurately as you can by placing a number beside each one as follows:

1. Rarely or none of the time.
2. A little of the time.
3. Some of the time.
4. A good part of the time.
5. Most or all of the time.

Please begin:

1. My child gets on my nerves.
2. I get along well with my child.
3. I feel that I can really trust my child.
4. I dislike my child.
5. My child is well behaved.
6. My child is too demanding.
7. I wish I did not have this child.
8. I really enjoy my child.
9. I have a hard time controlling my child.
10. My child interferes with my activities.
11. I resent my child.
12. I think my child is terrific.
13. I hate my child.
14. I am very patient with my child.
15. I really like my child.
16. I like being with my child.

17. I feel like I do not love my child.
18. I feel very angry toward my child.
19. I feel violent toward my child.
20 I feel very proud of my child.
21. I wish my child were more like others I know.
22. I just do not understand my child.
23. My child is a real joy to me.
24. I feel ashamed of my child.

Reverse-score item numbers: 2, 3, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, 21 and 24. Copyright Walter W. Hudson, 1976.

Appendix C

INDEX OF FAMILY RELATIONS

(Instructions similar to Appendix B)

1. The members of my family really care about each other.
2. I think my family is terrific.
3. My family gets on my nerves.
4. I really enjoy my family.
5. I can really depend on my family.
6. I really do not care to be around my family.
7. I wish I was not part of this family.
8. I get along well with my family.
9. Members of my family argue too much.
10. There is no sense of closeness in my family.
11. I feel like a stranger in my family.
12. My family does not understand me.
13. There is too much hatred in my family.
14. Members of my family are really good to one another.
15. My family is well respected by those who know us.
16. There seems to be a lot of friction in my family.
17. There is a lot of love in my family.
18. Members of my family get along well together.
19. Life in my family is generally unpleasant.
20. My family is a great joy to me.
21. I feel proud of my family.
22. Other families seem to get along better than ours.
23. My family is a real source of comfort to me.
24. I feel left out of my family.
25. My family is an unhappy one.

Reverse-score item numbers: 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 23. Copyright Walter W. Hudson, 1977.

Appendix D

PARENTS' STATEMENTS OF INFORMATION CONSIDERED EXCEPTIONALLY USEFUL

SESSION 1 : THE GIFT OF CHILDREN

That no-one is perfect.
Developmental phases.
One should not reject one's child, only his actions.
Positive guidance to children.
Positive leadership to children.

SESSION 2 : THE JOY OF PARENTHOOD

Types of parents, with advantages and disadvantages of each.
Responsibility of parenthood.
Parenting styles.
Power and authority.

SESSION 3 : THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSCIENCE

That I am to differentiate between the FORM and the NORM; thus actualization of one's norm.
Where the conscience comes from.
How norms are unconsciously present in our daily lives.

SESSION 4 : COMMUNICATING WITH OUR CHILDREN

Guidelines to communicate better with the children.
All forms of communication.
How to communicate correctly.

SESSION 5 : DEVELOPING THE SELF-IMAGE OF THE CHILD

Self-image.
Climate of self-image.
To respect one's child.
That children should know that they are also human beings and also have a right to be part of the family.

SESSION 6: PROBLEM-SOLVING (HANDLING CONFLICTS)

The way in which the programme proposes that problem-solving should be done.
Consistency in one's actions.

SESSION 6/7 : DISCIPLINE

Deprivation rather than corporal punishment.
The practical problems solved in the group.
How to solve a problem with a view to discipline.
Applying discipline.

Appendix E

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS MADE BY PARENTS

SESSION 1 : THE GIFT OF CHILDREN

Offer more such courses with (Miss X) as group leader.
I come to the course with an open mind. I try to gather as much as possible in order to equip my children for life as best I can.
To equip myself as a fair but loving friend to my family.

SESSION 2 : THE JOY OF PARENTHOOD

More such presentations.
Facilitator is continuously impartial.

SESSION 3 : DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONSCIENCE

Most informative and very good to contemplate on how to act in situations. Very necessary. We learn from one another - different circumstances. What a pity so few participants.

SESSION 4 : COMMUNICATING WITH OUR CHILDREN

Found it very useful and also informative.
I find the lecture very informative, it teaches me a lot which I would like to convey to my child.

SESSION 5 : DEVELOPING THE SELF-IMAGE OF THE CHILD

Group leader is gaining more and more self-confidence as the programme progresses.
Very informative.

SESSION 6 : PROBLEM-SOLVING (HANDLING CONFLICTS)

Every child is unique - every solution unique.

SESSION 7 : DISCIPLINE

Would like to attend a similar course again, because it teaches one more about yourself - so, until the next POLS.

The lecture sets me thinking, you learn a lot from other people's mistakes.

X

Mediation and family violence*

David Scott-Macnab

I think that it may be safe to say that mediation has become an accepted reality in the modern family genre and that it is now simply a matter of how and to what extent it will develop in the next decade, particularly in South Africa.[1] It is now trite to assert that family mediation is here to stay; recent developments in the private and public mediation fields in South Africa have shown that interest is firmly entrenched in academe[2] and in the private practice sphere,[3] and we must now accept developments as they take place, being always vigilant with regard to the expansion of mediation in other countries. My prediction in 1988 that mediation in the family context would become an important adjunct to our family law appears to have had some substance,[4] and I think that it is now time to explore the various vagaries of the process as they arise in the day-to-day application of mediation in the field of matrimonial disputes.

One of the most controversial and divisive issues of the mediation process at the present time is whether cases involving domestic violence should, or indeed can, be mediated. I do not think that it can be gainsaid that in cases where domestic violence is absent, mediation has a conciliatory, constructive and important role to play in divorce. This view is supported by the great interest taken in the process by the legislatures, judiciaries and bar councils of the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom. Sufficient empirical writing has been published on the efficacy of mediation to ensure its place in the legal systems of the world. However, there has been heard of late the dissonant note of the incompatability of mediation in cases involving family violence and abuse. This issue, at present, tends to place mediators into two distinct camps: those who feel that no mediator should touch a case involving physical violence and abuse,[5] and those who feel the process to be an holistic one and who are prepared to become involved where there is a history of violence.[6] In the United States, where more than 26 states have legislation governing family mediation (some states require a mandatory submission to the process,[7] while other states rely on a judicial referral of the parties to mediation[8]), there has been recent legislation which exempts parties who have been subject to a history of domestic violence, from any participation in court-connected mediation.[9]

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* The full report: *Mediation in the family context* (1991) is stored in the HSRC library — stack number 306.85 SCO.

1. All notes are at the end of the chapter.

Opinions regarding the relevance and viability of mediation in the violent family scenario vary considerably. Judith I. Avner and Susan Herman[10] state categorically:

> A fundamental premise of mediation is the ability of the participants to communicate freely and to negotiate with each other as equals. If physical, verbal, or psychological battering, or any other kind of intimidation in your marriage makes you unable to speak without fear of continuing or future harm, mediation is not appropriate and should not be pursued.

Many, but not all, mediators agree. The question was raised at a conference of attorneys, mediators, ministers and others sponsored by the Interfaith Conciliation Centre of Mount Vernon, New York, in 1989.[11] The same question was asked by me at a mediation conference at the Vermont Law School in June 1990.[12] My question received some startling contradictory opinions. The private and court-connected mediators who were present stated categorically that they would not involve themselves in family disputes where there was an element of intimidation; they said that such cases were matters for the ordinary justice system, or where appropriate, for mental health professionals. These comments drew criticism from the Hon. Stephen B. Martin, administrative judge for the Vermont courts, who encourages mediation in his court. He likened these mediators to an unreasonable char who would "clean the house, but refuses to do windows". He saw family mediators, rightly so I believe, as practising an holistic function in the family context where mediation plays the widest possible role in discovering underlying causes of conflict and reducing their sequelae. Thomas Christian,[13] who was also present, felt that family violence has no place in the mediation conference, because of the specialist nature of the therapy required in such cases.[14] However, the opposite view was held by Kathryn Fahnstock, a co-director of the Rural Justice Centre in Vermont, and former consultant with the rural courts systems in Kansas and Ohio. She felt that the inherent conflict management technique in a well-conducted mediation can be used effectively in family violence cases. However, writers have been against mediating such disputes from the beginning. Frank Sander, for example, feels that in cases of serious family violence, the formal system is absolutely necessary in order that the offender can be subject to some sanctioning.[15] It is in this argument that opinions for and against mediation in family violence issues so significantly diverge.

The more progressive view is that mediation, with its propensity for dissipating conflict and exposing underlying problems which may be the root cause of the violence in the first place, has a role to play in such cases. On the other hand, the traditional view is that violence, whether confined to the family or not, is a common law crime and the perpetrator deserves to be punished by way of a criminal law sanction. Be that as it may, disputes involving domestic violence are in fact being mediated in the United States[16] and in Australia[17] at present, and there is strong anticipation that they will be increasingly referred to mediation in the future.[18] It may be useful to consider the various attitudes and approaches more closely.

It has been estimated that spouse abuse occurs once every 18 seconds in the United States.[19] To the best of my knowledge there are no similar estimates for other countries, but there is no reason to believe that the problem is less prevalent elsewhere. As widespread as the problem is, it seems that it has been neglected, partly by a reticence on the part of the justice system to invade the family unit, and partly by a misguided perception that spouse abuse cases are not real crimes and that the courts might be better employed trying "genuine" offenders![20] A mechanism which is being used at present in the United States for spousal abuse cases is the pre-trial diversion programme.

> The term implies a halting or suspending of formal criminal proceedings against the alleged criminal perpetrator in favor of a noncriminal

proceeding which, if successful, is the final disposition of the criminal offense.[21]

The main benefit of the pre-trial diversion programme is seen as the postponing of criminal proceedings and the concomitant rancour which they will cause to an already tense situation within the marriage. Many battered spouses avoid laying charges against their partners not only out of fear of further reprisals, but also to avoid the social opprobrium which criminal proceedings may bring upon the family, particularly the children. Where the full weight of the criminal justice system is brought against the abusing spouse, there is no guarantee that the behaviour will not be repeated, and the ultimate victim of the whole procedure is usually the marriage itself.

It seems that the recognition of spouse abuse as serious criminal behaviour is the first important step which must be taken before the problem can be addressed successfully.[22] This, it is claimed, will alter the attitude of the police who are the ones who are usually the first to come into contact with spousal abuse cases. Secondly, secure in the knowledge that the laying of a charge against a spouse will not necessarily result in a court trial, victims will feel easier about reporting incidents of abuse. Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, cases which would otherwise go unreported will be identified and will be able to enter a formal, structured rehabilitatory process wherein all can benefit.

The process involves a commitment on the part of the criminal justice system, particularly prosecutors and the police. For example, a law may provide for a prosecutor to enter into an agreement with the defendant in writing in which the defendant waives his rights to a speedy trial and agrees to file monthly reports with the prosecutor certifying his compliance with the diversion agreement. Failure to comply with the agreement results in proceeding with the prosecution. The diversion programme also calls for a commitment on the part of the police. Aware that there is machinery for addressing domestic violence cases, and that the system is prepared to take such cases seriously, the police will be more assiduous in making arrests and thereby leading such cases into the system.

The nature of the pre-trial diversion programme can and does include mediation, arbitration and family counselling, but mediation programmes alone have been criticized as inappropriate.

> A strong argument can be made in favor of mediation if the only goals are reconciliation and keeping the family unit together. Unfortunately, the balance of power in most violent relationships conflicts with the underlying concept of mediation - that of two equal parties meeting with a neutral third party to work out differences. Generally, both the victim and the abuser blame the victim for the violence, and mediation provides yet another opportunity for the batterer to explain exactly what it is about the victim's behaviour that provokes him to beat her. "Mediation allows the husband to negotiate a change in his wife's behavior and fails to send a message to the batterer that he is responsible for his conduct and that his conduct is wrong." [23]

It seems, therefore, that the advantage of the pre-trial diversion programme is that the abuser does not escape the consequences of what is undoubtedly criminal behaviour; but because of the particular circumstances surrounding the offence, namely the family situation, the abuser is given the opportunity to ameliorate his conduct with professional assistance. He is at all times fully aware that should he not co-operate, the full weight of a criminal prosecution and sanction will be his lot. At the same time the community's attitude that marital abuse is a private matter and not a serious offence will be corrected.

While the pre-trial diversion programme has undoubted merits, it may be difficult to implement in South Africa. First, its institution requires trained manpower,[24] not always readily available here. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, a change of attitude is required by the criminal justice system itself. Police and prosecutors must view the battered spouse in a serious light and be prepared to follow through from arrest to prosecution in the same way as if the victim had been a non-family member. If this attitude is achieved, the first step in creating the climate for pre-trial diversion will have been made.

Despite criticism that mediation is an inappropriate mechanism in the family violence pre-trial diversion procedure, Lazlo and McKean, in a major paper at the 1987 United States Commission on Civil Rights symposium: Battered Women: Issues of Public Policy, stated that:

> Often in family violence, it is difficult to determine to what extent the victim has contributed to her own victimisation. It is particularly in these victim offender interactions that diversion through mediation is appropriate.[25]

It is difficult to imagine a procedure which deals with family violence, whether it involves a pre-trial diversion process or not, which does not take mediation into account. Lazlo and McKean go to great pains to emphasize the value of mediation in identifying frustration and other underlying causes within the family which lead to abusive behaviour; but as in mediation generally, the skill and experience of the mediator is of the utmost importance. Pre-eminently in spouse abuse cases, the mediator must constantly conduct the mediation in order to equalize the balance of power between the parties. Meeting the parties separately before the mediation begins is usually a good way of addressing the problem of power imbalance.[26]

Astor says:

> The issue of power imbalance raises, *inter alia*, the difficult question of whether there are some cases of abuse too serious to mediate. Much of the literature assumes that this is so. The meaning of "serious" is not made explicit but it is generally tied to the degree or persistence of violence.
>
> ... The level of violence is obviously an important issue, but it seems to the present writer that it is the impact of the violence on the woman concerned which is the crucial issue in mediation. Whatever the level of violence, a woman who is too terrified to be in the same room as her partner or who, once there, is too intimidated to assert her needs and fears even with support, should not be in mediation (or should not be in mediation at that time).[27]

It would seem that for mediation to be effective where the abused feels intimidated and unwilling to face her partner in a mediation session, a period of counselling of both parties prior to any attempts at mediation is indicated. One thing is clear: There are no quick outcomes in mediating family violence.

Bethel and Singer have come forward with some very positive evidence that mediation can provide an effective remedy for many victims of domestic violence. They rely on the data of a programme instituted by the District of Columbia Mediation Service in the United States. The DCMS programme suggests that mediation may be effective for the following reasons:

1) that there is a greatly reduced likelihood of any further violence or threatening behaviour;

2) the process is perceived as fair by both complainant and respondent, and

3) the process is no more time-consuming or costly than alternative remedies likely to be available for that class of dispute.[28]

Cases of incorrigible and repeated physical abuse clearly cannot and should not be mediated in the first instance; similarly, where the abused feels threatened or intimidated and has difficulty in being in the same presence as her spouse, mediation should be postponed in favour of a prior counselling process which attempts to set the stage for a co-operative atmosphere. Once this has been achieved, there is no reason *per se* why mediation should not be used to resolve problems which may, perhaps, for the first time see the light of day. It must be realized that before the parties finally get in front of a mediator, there has most likely been a long, suppressed history of abuse. This suppression, in itself, could have contributed to the quantum of the violence by the abuser, and the fear and unwillingness to co-operate in a mediating process on the part of the victim. Getting to the mediation conference table may be the first step in resolving problems which have been festering for a long time.

I submit that before sides are finally taken on this issue in South Africa, the following should be considered:

1) the nature of the family relationship as a whole;

2) the history and nature of the offence or offences which have been committed, and

3) the possibility, however remote, of an experienced mediator investigating and analyzing the underlying causes of such offences.

Quick resort to the criminal justice system may, or probably will, simply exacerbate a serious state of affairs and put an end to any choice of a settlement of the conflict within the family. The inexorable road to divorce and post divorce conflict will have been irreversably embarked upon.

Be that as it may, there is a strong lobby among court-connected mediators and judges in the United States who feel that mediation is not an appropriate process for family violence cases, and Minnesota, for example, incorporates a warning in its statute, which encourages custody and visitation mediation, and which reads as follows:

> If the court determines there is probable cause that one of the parties, or a child of a party, has been physically or sexually abused by the other party, the court shall not require mediation.[29]

Dennis Marthaler and Lisa Postswald,[30] mediators working in St Louis County, Minnesota, persuaded judges that the statute[31] did not absolutely bar them from working with abusive couples and that the words "shall not require mediation" were not peremptory. As a result judges referred family violence cases to them. Their experience showed that mediation could be seen as an "additional response to abuse" while allowing the legal consequences of abuse to follow their normal course. Marthaler and Postswald came to the conclusion:

> We think that these special procedures can address the fears and concerns of those who claim such couples are inappropriate for mediation because of their history of abuse and propensity for further violence toward each other. We think that the mediator must impose certain rules that may not be negotiated (such as respect for boundaries, consequences for continued violence, and other rules spelled out above). However, by giving the couple the opportunity to negotiate about other aspects of the agreement, and then ensuring that the bargaining process remains fair and balanced, it appears that even these high-conflict couples can obtain negotiated agreements as well as have some measure of success in following those agreements.[32]

The controversy, however, still rages, with proponents viewing domestic violence as a crime rather than a breakdown in interpersonal relationships. Kelly Rowe writes:

> (Thus) three factors combine to make mediation an unlikely answer to the problems involved in spousal violence. The first is the passivity, the learned helplessness of the battered woman. The second is the non-mutual nature of the violent behavior. The third is the seriousness of spousal violence, which makes it more accurately classified as a crime rather than a dispute.[33]

This hard-line approach, it is submitted, closes all the doors on the possibilities of mediatory intervention and future experimentation, together with the promise which mediation holds for the prevention of future transgressions. Bethel and Singer conclude their response to mediation in family violence cases with the following comment:

> Mediation is a promising technique because it is "quick, responsive, and humanistic - a powerful and, one suspects, increasingly rare combination in the lives of many citizens". Early indications are that many domestic conflicts, even those with some elements of violence, can be successfully resolved if a mediation programme is well-designed and managed. The promise mediation offers is to improve the choices available to victims and relieve the judicial system of cases not suitable for prosecution in a timely and humane manner. Further experimentation should help increase our ability to select suitable cases for mediation and integrate programs within existing social and legal services.[34]

In conclusion, I submit that the hope which mediation offers couples involved in family violence should be preferred to the traditional approach which makes no distinction between an abusive situation, whether it is within the confines of the family or not. Marriage is a very private affair and, as we have seen, responds well to private dispute resolution mechanisms. Generally, mediation has proved to be very successful in resolving disputes between married and divorcing couples, and there is sufficient empirical evidence in practice and in the literature to confirm this. Clearly, family violence is the wild card with regard to mediation in the family context. The abhorrence or indifference with which it is viewed tends, I feel, to influence unduly the various attitudes to the suitability of mediating abusive couples. Too strong an emphasis is placed on the violence itself and too little on the dispute. Violence is the result of a dispute and is not the dispute itself. The dispute, in essence, may lie dormant, unidentified and incomprehensible to the parties, erupting mindlessly in physical abuse. Recognizing the essential difference between the causes of a dispute and how the parties respond to those causes is the strongest argument for mediating cases of family violence. Mediation can uncover the true causes of the dispute and once they have been identified, a process of dispute settlement may be set in motion. The causes of the violence may be very specific, for example, substance addiction or perhaps psychological instability. A good mediator will identify these problems and advise special rehabilitatory processes in order to combat them. The investigatory nature of mediation can facilitate such identification.

Thus mediation can be of practical use in dealing with abusive couples, and in these cases may even involve a dual process. In the first instance, the mediator may be obliged (and this will require a special application of his prowess) to concentrate on discovering why and in what circumstances violence is resorted to. Once he knows the answer to these questions he can either attempt to address them himself or recommend special counselling.

If this is successful, and once the emotional balance of power has been restored, the parties will be in a position to accept ordinary mediation and proceed with their specific problem-solving.

Footnotes

1. Nancy H Rogers and Craig A McEwen write: "Mediation is used in thousands of divorce-related disputes annually, in part as a result of court statutes or rules in the majority of states that mandate or in some other way encourage its use."

   Mediation: Law policy practice (1989), p. 204.
   The use of alternative dispute mechanisms has become widespread in the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, not only in the family context but also in other areas of dispute involving the environment, agricultural debt, labour, civil rights, insurance and small civil claims. Over 26 states in America have statutes governing family mediation and such matters as participation, confidentiality, liability of mediators and qualifications. In all there are over 340 state statutes at present which legislate on alternative dispute resolution, of which mediation is but one mechanism.

2. Elaine Cigler (1986). **Mediation — its significance, technology and feasibility in social work services related to divorce issues** (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Rand Afrikaans University; David Scott-Macnab (1985). **Mediation arbitration — a better way of justice?** (unpublished LL.M. dissertation, University of Natal, Durban; Wilna Hoffman (1987). Divorce mediation: An approach to family conflict resolution. **Social Work Journal,** 2, 8; David Scott-Macnab (1988). Mediation in the family context. **South African Law Journal,** 105, 709; David Scott-Macnab & MS Khan (1985). Mediation and arbitration as forms of dispute settlement in the South African criminal law. **South African Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology,** p. 103; David Scott-Macnab & James G Mowatt (1986). Mediation and arbitration as alternative procedures in maintenance and custody disputes in the event of divorce. **De Jure,** 19, 313; David Scott-Macnab & James G Mowatt (1987). Family mediation — South Africa's awakening interest. **De Jure,** 20, 41; David Scott-Macnab (1987). The legal profession's declining image: Is there a better way? **De Rebus** p. 27; David Scott-Macnab (1987). Mediation prior to small claims litigation: A human approach. **De Rebus,** p. 619; David Scott-Macnab (1989). Mediation — The procedure of the future. **De Rebus,** p. 211; JG Mowatt (1987). The Mediation in certain divorce matters Act 1987: News but nothing new. **De Rebus,** p. 611; JG Mowatt (1988). Divorce mediation — the Mediation in Certain Divorce Matters Act. **Tydskrif vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Reg,** p. 47; JG Mowatt (1988). Are we ready to mediate? **South African Law Journal,** 105, 314; JG Mowatt (1988). Some thoughts on mediation. **South African Law Journal,** 105, 727; JG Mowatt (1989). Mediation and Chinese legal theory. **South African Law Journal,** 106, 349; JG Mowatt(to be published in February or May 1991). Holism and the law. **South African Law Journal**; JG Mowatt & MH Levy (1991). Mediation in the legal environment. **De Jure,** 24, 65.

3. Recently the South African Association of Family Mediators was constituted in order to oversee and assist in establishing family mediation in South Africa. Membership now amounts to over 100 professionals from the fields of law, psychology and social science.

Other groups of professionals have formed bodies associated with family mediation and training programmes which are being conducted across the country. To my knowledge there are at least three private mediators practising in South Africa on a full-time basis. Mediation modules are being introduced into curricula in law schools.

4. Scott-Macnab. Mediation in the family context. *Op. cit.* note 2, p. 726.
5. Frank EA Sander (1983). Family mediation: Prospects and problems **Mediation Quarterly,** 2(3), 11; Kelly Rowe (1985). The limits of the neighbourhood justice center: Why domestic violence cases should not be mediated. **Emory Law Journal** p. 855.
6. Charles A Bethel & Linda R Singer (1982). Mediation: A new remedy for cases of domestic violence. **Vermont Law Review,** 7, 15.
7. For example, see the California Civil Code (Child Custody Mediation) Section 1 sec. 4607; Maine Revised Statutes Annotated Title 19 Sections 214, 581, 752.
8. For example, see Texas Alternative Dispute Resolution Procedures Act (1987), Section 154, 024.
9. **National Centre on Women & Family Law Inc.** (September 1990). State laws exempting battered women from mediation. N.Y. The states involved are Colorado, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota and Oregon. A typical mandatory exception reads as follows: "No court shall compel parties to mediate any aspect of their domestic abuse case. Although the court may refer the case to the family service office of the probation department or victim/witness advocates for information gathering purposes, the court shall not compel the parties to meet together in such sessions."
10. **Divorce mediation: A guide for women.** (1984). NOW Legal Defense and Educational Fund Inc., p. 7. C/o 111 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019.
11. John Homer-Ibler (1987). **Negotiation Journal,** 3, 211.
12. Seminar on ADR in Rural and Non-Urban Court Systems. Sponsored by the Vermont Law School and the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Dispute Resolution, June 1-2, 1990, Vermont Law School, South Royalton, Vermont.
13. The director of the Community Dispute Resolution Centre Programme of the Unified Court System, State of New York, who controls a programme which deals with 11 000 dispute resolutions per year ranging from family, landlord and tenant to mobile homes disputes. He estimates his overall success rate to be 81%. His programme is situated at the AE Smith's State Office Building, P.O. Box 7039, Albany, N.Y. 12225.
14. *cf.* Mediation: No winners no losers (1987). **Liason,** p. 8; M Borkowski, M Murch & V Walker (1983). **Marital violence — the community response.** Tavistock: London.
15. Frank Sander, *op. cit.* note 5, p. 5.

16. Dennis Marthaler (1989). Successful mediation with abusive couples. **Mediation Quarterly,** 23, 53; Diane E Reynolds (1988). The use of pretrial diversion programmes in spouse abuse cases: A new solution to an old problem. **Ohio State Journal on Dispute Resolution,** 3, 415; Charles A Bethel & Linda R Singer, *op cit* note 6, p. 15.

17. Hilary Astor (1990). Domestic violence and mediation. **Australian Dispute Resolution Journal,** (143), 144.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Reynolds, *op. cit.* note 16, p. 415. The terms "abuse", "assault" or "battering" represent any acts carried out with the intention of physically injuring one's spouse. These terms do not embrace mental abuse for the purpose of this article.

20. *Ibid.* This attitude is, of course, medieval, implying, as it does, that a marriage contract somehow gives the abuser a licence to inflict injury on the other spouse and that no crime is thereby committed. A similar anachronism prevails in interspousal delictual actions where the parties are married in community of property; in such a case a personal injurious action between the spouses is effectively denied.

21. Reynolds, *op. cit.* note 16, p. 423.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Reynolds, *op. cit.* note 16, p. 417.

24. Lisa Lerman (1982). Stopping domestic violence: A guide for mediators. In: H Davidson, L Ray & R Horowitz (Eds). **Alternative means of family dispute resolution**, pp. 429-443. Washington D.C. ABA.

25. Astor, *op. cit.* note 17, p. 144.

26. Caucusing, or a meeting with the individual parties and the mediator before the mediation begins is a standard practice employed, for example, by Hugh McIsaac, Director and Chief Mediator, Family Court Services, Los Angeles Superior Court. See also: Margaret L Shaw (1985). Divorce mediation: Some keys to the process. **Mediation Quarterly,** 9, 27.

27. Astor, *op. cit.* note 17, p. 148.

28. Bethel & Singer, *op. cit.* note 6, p. 16.

29. Minnesota Statutes 518, 619 (Subdivision 2, Exception). See also: **National Centre on Women and Family Law Inc.,** *op. cit.* note 9.

30. Dennis Marthaler, *op. cit.* note 16, p. 53.

31. *Op. cit.* note 29.

32. *Op. cit.* note 30, p. 65.

33. Kelly Rowe, *op. cit.* note 5, p. 864.

34. Bethel & Singer, *op. cit.* note 6, p. 32. See also: Bernard Mayer (1989). Mediation in child protection cases: The impact of third party intervention on parental compliance attitudes. **Mediation Quarterly**, 24, 89; Janer Rifkin (1984). Mediation from a feminist perspective: Promise and problems. **Journal of inequality — A journal of theory and practice,** 2, 21; Bob Helm (1988). Mediators' duties, informed consent, and the Hatfields *versus* the McCoys. **Mediation Quarterly,** 21, 65; Sarah Childs Grebe (1989). Ethical issues in conflict resolution: Divorce mediation. **Negotiation Journal,** 5, 179; Robert Geffner & Mildred Daley Pageglow (1990). Mediation and child custody Issues in abusive relationships. **Behavioural Sciences and the Law,** 8, 151; Linda R Keenan (1983). Domestic violence and custody litigation: The need for statutory reform. **Hofstra Law Review** at 13, 407.

XI Adjustment in children and families:

An integrated summary

Solly Dreman

Abstract

In this seminar child and family adjustment was examined from an interdisciplinary point of view. Adjustment was perceived as occurring in dynamic nested contexts which involve interaction between the individual, the family, and the larger sociocultural context. It is suggested that positive adjustment in these different contexts is dependent upon learning from both the errors and positive aspects of the past which promotes integrative "second-order" change. Coping which involves fixation and "more of the same", or emotional "cut-off" from past traditions and legacies will probably result in poor long-term adjustment. Longitudinal and cross-cultural research which examines the **process** of change as well as the interaction between different **nested contexts** is recommended.

Introduction

The present chapter discusses papers presented at the Research Seminar on Children and Families, sponsored by the Co-operative Research Programme on Marriage and Family Life of the HSRC from July 25 to July 26, 1991. The papers are reviewed in the light of family research and clinical work carried out in South Africa and abroad. The conference was unique in its interdisciplinary approach to developmental issues in children and families and hopefully will serve as a basis for similar conferences in the future.

A. Methodological evaluation and recommendations

1. *A systems approach to research*

The family is an ideal focus for an interdisciplinary perspective since one can only understand the family by understanding the **individuals** who comprise it (psychology), the different **family roles** adopted by it (sociology), and the larger **societal and cultural setting** in which the family is immersed (anthropology). In trying to understand adjustment in children and families, it is important for the researcher and clinician to understand the dynamic interaction between these different **"nested contexts"** (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Similarly, we must abandon traditional linear models of causality, such as the traditional Freudian or classical medical models and instead view human development as occurring in a multivariate framework, which implicates processes of multiple feedback and **circular causation.** In such a dynamic framework a battered wife may not only be a passive receptor of her husband's blows, but may also incite them, as Professor Scott-Macnab suggested in his excellent presentation on mediation and family violence. Similarly, a child may be not only a victim of parental mistreatment but also become an active victimizer who learns to manipulate a threatening environment. Categorically blaming the victimizer may result from myopic linear thinking which ignores the circular nature of interpersonal dynamics.

Looking at different nested contexts on the **individual level**, one might consider such variables as age, temperament and gender. For example, in the short run it has been shown that young children have limited cognitive and emotional capacities to understand and cope with traumatic events, as well as limited capacities to attain social support that could buffer the impact of such events (Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 1989). This may cause them to be more severely affected by traumatic events. Temperamentally difficult infants have also been shown to be less able to adjust in the face of adverse circumstances (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1978). Gender may also be a factor since research shows that boys imitate and are more exposed to parental violence than are girls (Hetherington, Cox & Cox, 1982).

In considering individual adjustment social scientists often focus on negative behaviours and symptoms, ignoring positive coping behaviours and personality characteristics which lead to good adjustment in the face of trauma. Proff. Luiz and Fullard should be commended for looking at such positive mechanisms in their study of families with handicapped children. Positive personality characteristics, like self-esteem and hardiness, might also help to explain how youth studied in this seminar managed to survive under regimes of torture, murder and other forms of oppression in South Africa.

On the **family level**, family interaction and structure are very important in understanding adjustment and planning intervention or treatment programmes. With regard to **family interaction patterns**, traditional developmental psychology focused on the mother-child dyad and its influence on a child's development. This was later expanded to focus on triadic relationships such as those existing between both parents and the child, between the members of the nuclear family and the extended family, and between the family and society at large. Issues such as how parental co-operation/conflict affects children's adjustment, how parent-child coalitions against the remaining parent contribute to psychopathology, how grandparents support a single-parent family, or how societal norms affect parenting, are interpersonal issues which have been increasingly considered by researchers, educators and clinicians. In the divorce literature, for example, it has been found that positive adjustment in children is related to the balance between parental co-operation and conflict, as well as the conflict resolution styles utilized by parents (Camara & Resnick, 1989; Hetherington, Stanley-Hagan & Anderson, 1989). Similarly, the effect of societal norms on parental behaviour was taken into consideration in the development of specific parent training programmes in the Afrikaans culture in the paper presented by Prof. Annemie de Vos.

In considering interaction between different nested contexts, one must also consider the dynamic circular relationships existing between such contexts. Proff. Fullard and Luiz discussed how handicapped children caused stress in their families. However, in line with notions of circular causality it has been shown that families may also precipitate psychopathology and illness or exacerbate existing illness in their children. Minuchin, Rosman and Baker (1978), for example, have shown that disturbed family reaction patterns may precipitate or exacerbate existing psychosomatic/physical illnesses such as asthma, brittle diabetes, and anorexia nervosa. These psychosomatic families usually have difficulties in giving expression to unresolved conflicts, tend to be overprotective and rigid, and are characterized by "enmeshment", where there are no clear hierarchies or boundaries in the family, with little opportunity for individuation. In such a family constellation, the index patient often becomes the focus of these disturbed interpersonal relations, i.e. the victim on to whom the interpersonal pathology of the family is projected. The severe overprotection and focus on the index patient enables family members to avoid dealing with their own unresolved conflicts and problematic interactional patterns.

Minuchin, Rosman and Baker (1978) have demonstrated how family interaction patterns are related to somatic expressions of pathology. Parents of an anorectic child are asked to discuss some conflictual issue. Their free fatty acid levels, indicative of stress levels, are monitored simultaneously and usually become elevated as the discussion becomes more conflictual. Their anorectic child is then permitted to enter the room and the child's fatty acid level is also monitored. While the parents are given no further instruction, they almost inevitably start to show concern for their child by asking her if she is feeling well, whether she has eaten and similar queries. This interaction is usually accompanied by lowered fatty acid levels in the parents, but increased fatty acid levels and stress in the child. This is an elegant example of interaction between the psyche and soma in which the stressful interaction patterns between the parents are alleviated through increased attention to their "sick" child. This model, of course, is also applicable to the aetiology of psychological disorders in children.

In summary, because of the dynamic circular nature of human relationships, researchers looking at interaction patterns such as those described above have to be careful in drawing conclusions regarding causality. While disturbed parental behaviour may precipitate pathology in children, children can also use their illness to manipulate parental behaviour. For example, if a child's pathology is embedded in a context of conflictual parental relationships, parents may avoid dealing with their own conflict through reinforcing the child's illness and joining forces to deal with the sick child. However, children may eventually learn to utilize their own pathology and "weakness" to manipulate their parents into making concessions and complying with their demands. In order to help resolve issues of causality in the interpersonal context statistical techniques such as path analysis, which helps discern the directionality of causal agents, should be employed.

Regarding research instruments, family researchers have started to look at interpersonal behavioural patterns by using scales such as FACES III (Olson, Portner & Lavee, 1985) which measure family adaptability and cohesion. Medium-range scores on adaptability are considered as optimally contributing to adjustment, with unduly high scores reflecting chaos and unduly low scores indicating rigidity. Similarly, medium-range scores on cohesion are considered optimal, with unduly high scores indicating enmeshment and unduly low scores indicating alienation/cut-off. Adaptability, or change, is very important in the family, although chaotic change or extreme rigidity is liable to be counterproductive to families and societies. Similarly, some sense of cohesion and belonging is important to development, with "cut-off" or extreme enmeshment hindering optimal growth. From these dimensions it might be implied that healthy adjustment involves a healthy sense of belonging (cohesiveness) to one's family of origin and heritage, without overdependence (enmeshment) or emotional "cut-off". Such belonging will promote change (adaptability), preventing perseveration of old behaviours (rigidity) or chaotic change with no roots in the past.

When we research or intervene with families, we must also consider **family structure**, which Susan Ziehl described as an important variable in understanding family life. People who maintain rigid notions of what constitutes a "family", restricting the term to nuclear two-parent families with children, may be ignoring social units with strong emotional ties, not based on kinship. Such interpersonal ties as those with a step-parent, peers, teachers and counsellors may be stronger than those one has with an emotionally or physically estranged parent. Thus it is important to take such interpersonal ties into account when considering the child's closest and perhaps most significant relationships.

Contemporary life cycle events such as divorce and remarriage have radically changed traditional concepts of family structure and what constitutes "family".

While mothers traditionally receive custody in divorce settlements, there has been an increasing trend in the last decade for fathers to obtain custody, particularly when children are older and when boys are involved. Recent research has shown that while girls adjust better than boys in single-parent maternal custody families, boys adjust better than girls when the situation is one of single-parent paternal custody (Zaslow, 1988, 1989; Zimiles & Lee, 1991). Mothers have more difficulty in setting limits for boys than for girls, while fathers have more difficulty in communicating and serving as a role model for girls, hence explaining why children adjust better when in custody of the same-sex parent. Since mothers obtain custody in over 90% of divorced families, this explains why adjustment differentials have generally favoured girls, when random samples of divorced parents have been studied. Dianne Braude's paper on support systems for children of divorce, while interesting, must be treated with caution since her conclusion that girls adjust better than boys after divorce may be an artifact of the family structure studied in her research, which consisted exclusively of maternal custody families.

The extended family and broader **social support systems** have been touched upon by Dianne Braude, Prof. Kotzé and Cathy Campbell. The effectiveness of these contexts may be dependent on the age of the children and their ability to utilize social support. Young preschool children cannot effectively utilize social support outside of the family and may only be able at a later age to utilize peer support, or that of extrafamilial adults. Another issue is the availability as compared with the effectiveness of social support systems. Research shows that social support is extended most by kin followed by friends, neighbours and professionals (Belle, 1981). While we may frequently turn to family support systems because of their availability, we may find that extrafamilial support systems such as friends, neighbours and professional helpers are more qualitatively effective and involve feelings of obligation to a lesser extent than the help given by relatives. We are currently examining such issues in our research on coping and adjustment patterns in families.

Another issue related to social support, in the face of change or trauma is **where** we are located in the process. In our research we have found that initially newly divorced mothers were defensive and anxious about their plight, denying the severity of the adverse events. In this instance their children were less willing to turn to peers, teachers and counsellors for support. However, once the initial state anxiety and defensiveness decrease, these families may be more ready to turn to, as well as accept, help offered from outside community agents. Future research in this area should try to examine such issues as when and to whom do children and parents turn to for social support at different stages of the divorce process.

In the larger **social context**, societal attitudes are very important since stereotypes, like gender- or race-linked attitudes, can hinder adjustment. Research by social scientists in this area would contribute to preventive educational programmes designed to change such adverse attitudes.

Besides the individual, familial and societal contexts, **situational** factors such as changes in socio-economic status and geographical relocation as well as changes in routines and habits may cause severe problems of adjustment in the face of transition. In divorce, for example, a lowering in socio-economic status has proven to be one of the major variables accounting for poor postdivorce adjustment (Hernandez, 1988). Similarly, change in residence as well as changes in routines and habits following divorce may cause severe adjustment problems in children. These are social rather than psychiatric problems, which social policy makers and planners must consider when dealing with families experiencing such transitional crises. Situational changes such as those described above may be particularly important in the South African setting where increasing migration of black and coloured populations from the rural areas to large urban settings may produce radical changes in life style and socio-economic status.

2. *Change in the family and society*

The importance of adaptive, or what has been termed "second-order", change (Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974) which integrates the past in promoting present and future adjustment/change, has been stressed throughout this seminar. Such change is more likely to be stable than "cut-off" from the past which usually breaks down under further stress, or the maintenance of old patterns of behaviour - "more of the same" - in spite of changing individual, familial or societal realities.

Cathy Campbell's excellent paper on family socialization and township youth noted the importance of intergenerational continuity on children's development. This theme can be transposed to the level of society at large, where ideally change should be systematic and integrative, learning from both mistakes **and** positive aspects of the past. Different cultures and folklore characterize South Africa and one must take them into account when planning and implementing change. One cannot make blacks behave like whites, or whites behave like blacks, just as one cannot expect the Afrikaans and English cultures to eliminate their cultural diversities overnight. Transition and change must allow for cultural differences, while capitalizing on areas of communality, in evolving towards a new South Africa.

Prof. Annemie de Vos' innovative work on parent training is an excellent example of intervention taking cultural considerations into account. This programme was highly cognizant of the strict Calvinistic notions regarding parent-child relations typifying the Afrikaans culture. Hence, change in existing family hierarchies and roles was stressed less, than was raising parental consciousness amongst the Afrikaans mothers participating in this programme. Change under these circumstances, while likely to be more gradual, is also likely to be more integrative since it avoids direct confrontation with culturally-linked norms and integrates the past in improving parenting skills in the present.

In Israel we also have our cultural differences, for example those existing between Jews born in Israel or Western countries *versus* those born in North African or Asiatic cultures. The latter, the Sepharadic Jews, tend to be highly traditional and patriarchal while the more western Ashkenaze Jews tend to be more liberal. If a Western female family therapist would try to instruct a father in a traditional patriarchal family how to improve his parenting, she may encounter considerable resistance, with the possibility that the family will leave therapy. However, being cognizant of such cultural components as the father's power and "gate-keeping" functions in the family may help the therapist in "joining" (Minuchin, 1974) this patriarchal constellation, and eventually promoting change without precipitating undue resistance. Acceptance of elements of the past in promoting change in the present should contribute to more integrative and adaptive adjustment in the long term.

Researchers, clinicians and social policy makers should engage in what Prof. Kotzé called "participant involvement" and learn the culture and folklore of the people they are researching or treating, or for whom they are planning social policy. We must adopt multidisciplinary perspectives, with a knowledge of cultural anthropology and sociology being necessary to understand individual development, and some knowledge of individual psychology being necessary to understand the sociological and anthropological perspectives of families and societies.

B. Further research implications

1. *Dynamic nature of families and societies*

The difficulties experienced due to change and transition are universal processes, even though the content involved may be quite different. In contemporary South Africa, fear of change and uncertainty are intertwined with the rapid transition characterizing this country with the abolition of apartheid legislation. Research has shown that while individuals, families and societies initially resist change, long-term adjustment requires that the lessons of the past be assimilated, both cognitively and emotionally, in order to move on to new more adaptive levels of "second-order change". The paradox of this premise is that adaptive **change** depends on a **stable** and **continuous** relation with one's past heritage, traditions and family ties, while **stability** requires the ability to **change** in the face of new realities. Long-term adjustment requires that we neither reactively "cut-off" (Bowen, 1978) from the past, nor persist in behaviours which reflect fixation and more of the same "first-order change" processes (Watzlawick, Weakland & Fisch, 1974). Instead, adaptive "second-order" change, characterized by emotional integration of one's past heritage, while at the same time adapting to the demands of the present and taking possible future contingencies into account, is necessary.

Many presenters at this seminar have noted the severe transitional strains and crises that contemporary South Africa is undergoing. While particular emphasis has been placed on the emotional "cut-off" (Bowen, 1978) of black youth from their families of origin, these transitional strains are pervasive and cut across racial and ethnic lines. "Cut-off" was illustrated vividly in Dr Pamela Reynold's discussion of youth in black families who suffered family losses due to murder, killing, torture and other forms of violence. These children experienced pervasive emotional cut-off from established family ties, yet managed to survive and pursue university studies. Similarly, Prof. Sylvia Viljoen described another form of loss - the diminishment of "parental authority" and traditional values - which occurs because of the increasing generation gap between youth and parents in black families. In the same context, Prof. Kotzé talked of how the children of Dixie, often cut off from their families of origin because of poverty and family dissolution, have developed "street smarts", i.e. coping behaviours which permit survival in the face of adversity.

The processes of cut-off in the South African context, described above, may result in poor long-term adjustment. While children experiencing such loss may be able to engage in short-term coping and survival behaviour, they may pay a heavy price in their long-term development. Research should address itself to the examination of how these late 20th century cohorts, exposed to cut-off, cope and adjust in the long run. Issues such as the ability of these young people to maintain long-term intimate relationships with others, as opposed to more machiavellianistic coping strategies, similar to those described by Prof. Kotzé, should be examined, employing longitudinal research designs.

Baumrind (1971) speaks of "authoritative" parenting which provides both warmth and limits for the developing child, contributing to their optimal adjustment. The children discussed in this seminar, in contrast, have experienced violence and intergenerational "cut-off" and are "high risk" since their emerging sense of identity has been deprived of the warmth, wisdom and limit-setting powers of the parental generation. Hence, their ostensibly "autonomous" functioning, characterized by resilience and survival behaviours, may actually be quite fragile and break down under future stress or trauma. Vulnerability may also characterize societies such as the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe where change is also occurring at a rapid rate and the past is rapidly being obliterated by emerging social realities. In these contexts, youth may also experience cut-off from past wisdom and experience, hence increasing the risk of maladjustment. It should be noted that vulnerability may also be experienced when societies, individuals and families pay "lip service" to change, when they are in fact perpetuating doctrines that have outlived their usefulness, i.e. "more of the same".

In summary, individual, familial and societal adaptation requires the ability to learn from and integrate one's past heritage, as well as to change and adjust to new realities. Longitudinal research is necessary which examines how healthy integration of the past contributes to adjustment, as opposed to mechanisms of "cut-off" or the perseveration of old behaviour patterns.

2. *Content vs process*

In trying to understand families it is important to pay attention to recurring interpersonal **processes** in addition to the manifest **content** of behaviour. Such an approach may be particularly relevant to cross-cultural research on families and societies where content may be very different, but interpersonal behavioural processes are quite similar. In listening to the material presented in this seminar, as well as in informal conversations I had with South Africans, I have been struck by the similarity of day-to-day interpersonal processes occurring in contemporary South Africa and Israel. For example:

a. The soldier, faced with violence and terror in the bush country of South Africa, often has problems of "re-entry" when he goes back to civilian life, as do our Israeli youth serving in the Gaza Strip, who on weekend leaves have to unwind from the stress of military duty in the midst of a hostile population.

b. The effects of violence and terror on families are pervasive, particularly that experienced by children. Prof. J.C. Kotzé and Dr Pamela Reynolds have noted the resilience, resourcefulness and hardiness of black children as well as their ability to survive in the face of violence, poverty and family disruption. In Israel, this process is also observed in the resilience of children repeatedly exposed to terrorist attacks and recurrent warfare. While the resilience of these children has been noted, the question posed by Prof. Steyn and others has been "What price do they pay in the long run?" It might be hypothesized, for example, that cut-off from one's family ties in South Africa, whether due to incarceration, murder or other forms of violence discussed by Dr Reynolds, or alienation from more traditional parental norms due to the generation gap, as discussed by Prof. Sylvia Viljoen, may result in long-term difficulties in establishing interpersonal intimacy. Cut-off from traditional family ties and failure to properly integrate one's past into one's present sense of self, are illustrated in our work with children in Israel whose parents were killed in terrorist attacks. These children tended to deny and cut themselves off from the traumatic circumstances related to their parents' death by refusing to talk about the tragic events with their surviving relatives or with mental health workers. This resulted in poor long-term adjustment, including difficulties in the area of interpersonal intimacy (Dreman & Cohen, 1982; Dreman, 1989; Dreman & Cohen, 1990). Cross-cultural and longitudinal research carried out in different cultures affected by violence and terrorism such as Ireland, Israel and South Africa would be most useful in understanding the common processes involved in recovery from such traumatic events.

c. The ethnic complexity characterizing South Africa also typifies Israel. Thus Israel, in a sense, has its own "blacks", "coloureds" and "whites" and has also experienced difficulties related to the integration of diverse ethnic groups. We have tried in the past, for example, to integrate children from Western origins with disadvantaged children of Middle Eastern or North African origins, with mixed success. Similarly, the current "white" Russian immigrants do not always see "eye to eye" with the relatively primitive dark-skinned "black" Ethiopian Jews and this has expressed itself in some conflict between these groups. The problem of integration of different ethnic groups by the host culture is a promising area for cross-cultural research.

C. A multivariate model

The present chapter suggests that we should take account of different **nested contexts**, issues of **intergenerational continuity** and problems of **causality** in order to understand processes of change in children and families in research and clinical practice. Tschann, Johnston and Wallerstein (1989) have recently adopted a model of path analysis to understand long-term post-traumatic adjustment in traumatic events. Their Double ABCX Model, adapted from Lavee, McCubbin and Patterson (1987), accounts for the issues of nested contexts, continuity and causality discussed above. The model predicts that family adjustment after traumatic circumstances is a cumulative result of stressors occurring both before and after the crisis, the personal, familial and social resources available to meet the demands of the crisis, and the family's perception of and orientation to the total situation. Hence, this model proposes that family change occurs as a dynamic interplay of forces related to the family's past history, its present perceptions of and orientation to the situation, as well as the resources available in the different nested contexts - individual, familial and social - affecting family life.

This model not only stresses continuity by relating to the importance of the past in present adjustment, but path analysis inherent in this model permits the resolution of issues related to the direction of causality. One must be cautious in applying traditional "linear" models since cause and effect relations can change in the framework of the dynamic nested contexts discussed. This model was recently employed in testing the assumption that divorcing couples have to undergo an "emotional divorce" from the former spouse before they can form new and healthier social relations. Tschann, Johnston and Wallerstein (1989) in contrast, using path analysis, found the opposite was true, i.e. engaging in new social relations would decrease maladaptive attachment behaviour to the former spouse. Resolution of this issue of causality might have important intervention implications since it may be inferred from these findings that individual therapy designed to resolve issues of intrapsychic attachment might prove less effective than interventive attempts encouraging the building of new social networks.

Utilization of this model may prove useful for the social scientist in the South African context. For example, perceiving certain ethnic groups as the victims of broader societal prejudices, may preclude the "kernel of truth" hypothesis which professes that broad societal prejudices may in part be caused by certain objective attributes of these minority groups, which in turn influence societal attitudes. Application of this model might help clarify issues of causality related to such attitudes and contribute to preventive and treatment programmes designed to promote racial integration.

In summary, this chapter suggests that researchers must be aware of the multifaceted "nested contexts" which affect family coping and adjustment. Multivariate analysis which examines the dynamic interaction of these contexts, while bearing in mind issues of circular causation and process, should help to more objectively describe coping and adjustment processes in children and families. Cross-cultural and longitudinal research, which describes universal processes of change in the face of crisis and transition, is also recommended.

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